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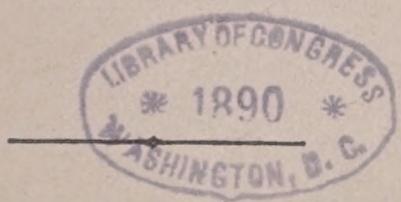


Les Bohémiens au XV^e siècle.

THE
BOHEMIANS
IN THE
FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF HENRI GUENOT,

By MRS. J. SADLIER.



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THE BOHEMIANS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

I.

A FAIR IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Who has not heard of the famous fairs of Caen, of Beaucaire, of Guibray, of Sinigaglia, of Leipsic, and many others, whose privilege it is to bring together in one single mart the commerce and the productions of divers countries ?

Now these meetings of merchants, so much talked of at the present time, pale before a fair of the middle ages, famous on other accounts, and which, although not sufficiently known in our days, were immensely popular at that time. Neither Europe, Africa, nor Asia has anything comparable. This fair was called the *landit*, from a Latin word which signifies appointed day, or place.

The landit was held on the vast plain that extends from La Chapelle, then a mere village, and St. Denis, to the very gates of Paris. There, during the hot

summer months, there suddenly arose, as it were by magic, a city of boards and canvas. It had its streets, its squares, its crossings, its fountains ; a numerous foreign population came to tarry some days in that artificial city, fated to disappear as quickly as it had been constructed.

For houses it had vast stores, kept by merchants flocking thither from all parts of France, from the extremities of Europe, from the far off countries of the East, and even from Africa.

The renown of this fair, so ancient that chroniclers make it date from the time of King Dagobert, had crossed mountains and seas : it was talked of in every country of the world.

It is a curious fact that in those ages reputed as barbarous by a certain school, the intercourse between the different peoples was little less frequent than it is to day between France and Algiers. Assuredly people would be astonished in our time, when communication is, nevertheless, so prompt and so easy, to see arriving in our great marts merchants from Central Africa, from Turkey, from Syria. But in the fifteenth century, and for long after, a crowd of merchants undertook fearful voyages, through countries without roads and infested by brigands. They usually went in caravans, armed like warrior men, and making use of camels to transport their merchandise to its destination.

The Crusaders had developed this adventurous spirit. For many ages they had established constant

intercourse between the East and the West, and the Mussulman invasion of Asia had not yet totally hindered commercial relations. Moreover, the discovery of America had not opened to the current of human activity the vast outlets of the New World.

Accordingly, at the beginning of April in the year 1427, although the fair of the landit had already lost considerable of its importance, the plain of St. Denis still presented a spectacle singularly varied and full of incredible animation. The village of La Chapelle disappeared amid a forest of booths, fashioned in all shapes, tents and pavilions striped with a thousand colors. The plain and the houses swarmed with people. A mighty hum arose from the bosom of that human hive, echoing afar off.

MERCHANTS of all nations mingled there and jostled each other : Poles were seen in their lambskin cap ; Greeks, with the national barrad ; Syrians, their head wrapped in the turban ; Armenians, wearing a sort of mitre ; Africans, with no other clothing than the traditional breeches. Here and there were stretched at their ease the camels and mules whose back had transported the objects of traffic.

The rarest products of industry and art were there found together : thick furs from the Caucasus, transparent gauzes from Asia, exquisite perfumes from Arabia, and costly ornaments : in a word, all that comfort or luxury could require.

Elsewhere might be seen displayed vast volerries filled with strange birds of radiant plumage, of divers

notes; then cages strongly grated containing those wild beasts but little seen now-a-days save in their native forests or the menageries of our cities. Lions, tigers frightened the multitude by their roaring; bears, wolves, and some elephants also attracted the eye.

The day on which our story opens was one of the warmest of the year. The water of the fountains placed at every crossing, and shooting up to fall down in rain, succeeded neither in laying the dust, nor in tempering the sun's heat. So, many of the curious took refuge as they could under the tents erected before the booths and pavilions, or more still under the awnings in front of the theatres erected on the fair-green.

Amongst these theatres, that of the clerks of the Basoche drew the greatest number of spectators. It had been established near the village of La Chapelle. On a high platform paraded the King of the Basoche, bedizened with finery, and parodying sovereignty even in its attributes and prerogatives: charged with the empire of *fools*, he wore the royal head-gear; his chancellors had the cap and gown of magistrates; a whole retinue of officers, bedubbed generals, high chancellors, high stewards, secretaries, bailiffs, criers, ushers, escorted their chief. His silver shields had for arms three ink-horns in a field azure crested with helmets.

The scenes represented on this burlesque stage were comedies, grotesque farces called *sottises*, that is to say, follies, or mad pranks.

But the brethren of the Passion, the seniors of the clerks of the Basoche, continued to draw the largest concourse. On their stage were played the Mysteries, a simple representation of religious scenes from the Old and New Testament. The year in question, the brethren gave scarcely anything but the famous *Mystery of the holy Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, an immense drama, a type of the kind, counting no less than thirty thousand verses.

The stage whereon it was represented, a gigantic construction of beams and planks, overlooked the whole landit. Under its vast awning intended to shelter the spectators from the scorching heat of the sun, an enormous multitude were crowded together. This, as chronicles relate, was the arrangement of the theatre. The stage was closed by a canvas, which did not rise, but was drawn aside, like the curtains of a recess.

This curtain removed, there was seen at the farther end of the stage several scaffoldings, one over the other, like those used in the construction of an edifice. The highest represented paradise, others the earth, Herod's palace, Pilate's pretorium. On the first floor appeared the dwellings of Our Lady's relatives, her oratory, and the crib with the oxen. In front, to the left of the spectators, curtains formed a species of niche, into which the actors went when they were to play a part intended to be concealed from the spectators, such, for instance, as the decollation of St. John the Baptist. Opposite that niche,

to the right, hell was figured by a dragon's mouth, which opened and closed as often as one or more devils wanted to make their entrance or their exit on the stage. Behind that niche and that mouth, instead of a green-room, steps were raised on which the actors sat when their parts were ended.

It is easy to understand that the immense drama of the Passion was too long to be represented all at once. Hence, it had been divided into four days. At the moment when we introduce the reader to the fair-green of the landit, and conduct him to the theatre of the brethren of the Passion, the fourth day was commencing. That last part of the great Mystery, full of life, of vigor, and to some extent of local coloring, employed five hundred actors. The spectators, standing on tiptoe, throbbing with indescribable emotion, heard and watched with religious attention that drama so tragical and so grand, inspired by the sufferings of a God.

It was the hour when Judas repenting gave back to the Jews the money he had received from them as the price of treachery. Notwithstanding that eloquent asseveration of the Just One's innocence, Pilate had Jesus conducted to the pretorium. At sight of the Lord, the soldiers lowered their lances, and the interrogation opened. Then appeared for the prisoner all those who had been cured by the Saviour. Pilate himself strove to convince the enemies of Jesus of his innocence, but the Jews in-

sisted that he should be conducted before Herod the Idumean.

On seeing his master pass, Judas, torn with remorse, invoked hell. Dame Despair immediately appeared to him, and with horrible threats and gestures offered him in a wild chaunt all sorts of instruments for making away with himself. Last of all she presented a halter; Judas did not wait to be asked twice, he took the rope and hung himself. Dame Despair filled the office of executioner; with the help of the other devils, she carried him off to hell, where Dante, completing with a stroke of his genius that vigorous picture, shows him to us between the teeth of Satan, who eternally chews in his fiery mouth the greatest of sinners.

The assembly, held in suspense during all this scene, breathed again after the chastisement of the perfidious disciple, and were preparing to direct their attention to the actors and the sequel of the drama when a woman's piercing cry was heard; it proceeded from the midst of the crowd, and made every heart thrill. All eyes were turned towards the place whence the cry had arisen several times in succession. A stout, youthful-looking woman, clothed like the common people, made her way through the crowd, and began to wander around the theatre, crying in a tone of despair:

"Where is the child? My God! where is the child?"

"What aileth thee?" demanded a burgher of St. Denis, who had come to see the Mystery.

"The child! the child!" she went on screaming, "I don't see it anywhere!"

"What child dost thou mean?" asked the compassionate burgher.

"I had with me, there in the crowd, a little girl, who has suddenly disappeared."

"Compose yourself; she is not lost——"

"Help me, good master, to seek her, I conjure thee!"

"Most willingly; but be calm and don't be frightened without cause."

"Ah! if I find her not what shall become of me!"

A crowd gathered round the young woman, whose grief was so overpowering, so affecting, and the strangest comments began already to be made. The burgher resumed:

"Tell us what the child was like; perchance we may then be able to lend some assistance. In the first place what is her name?"

"Jeanne Belval."

"Her age?"

"Five years. She lives in La Chapelle."

"Is she your daughter?"

"No; I am only her nurse."

"How was she attired?"

"She wore a small hat with a red plume, a black silk dress and mantilla. She is small in size, her features fine and delicate, slightly tinged with the

hues of the rose and the carnation; she has the prettiest dark eyes, and her hair, of a chesnut color, falls in ringlets on her shoulders."

"Enough," cried several of her compassionate hearers, amongst whom were some women; "make yourself easy, the child shall be found; we shall go with you in search of her."

Speaking thus, they scattered in various directions, and the nurse resumed her search in the neighbourhood of the large theatre. Her search remaining fruitless, she extended it farther. But in vain did she search with her eye the groups, the stalls, the shops, Jeanne appeared not, and the unfortunate woman cried out sobbing:

"My God! how shall I present myself before the child's mother, who had so warned me to watch over the precious charge she entrusted to me!"

Having gone over the fair-green in all directions, she met the man who had already interested himself in her trouble. He had conscientiously fulfilled his promise, and had neglected nothing to discover the lost child. He appeared disappointed, and the perspiration was running down his face.

"Well!" asked the nurse, "have you succeeded in obtaining any information?"

"No, nothing, absolutely nothing."

"My misfortune is at its height, there is no cure for it. What am I to do now?"

"Will you follow the advice I am going to give you?"

"Ah! speak!"

"Return to the child's parents, whilst I continue the search hereabouts."

"I dare not do it."

"But you must."

"I can never bring myself to be the messenger of such tidings," replied the unhappy woman, wringing her hands convulsively.

"Take courage!" said the burgher.

"What good will courage do me?"

"Did you not tell me that the child was intelligent?"

"So much so that she was the idol of her father, mother, and all that knew her."

"If that be so you may make your mind easy."

"Her loss will leave the whole family miserable."

"Jeanne is not lost; I will answer for it."

"Heaven grant it be so. But what makes you think so?"

"I am sure she will find her way back to La Chapelle. Whilst you are grieving here, she is, doubtless, in the arms of her parents."

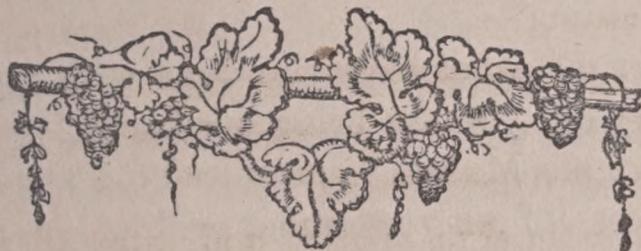
"I never thought of that, and, after all, it may be as you say."

"Run home quick, then, and see how the matter stands."

Hope suddenly sprang up again in the nurse's mind. She immediately quitted the fair-green, and hastily bent her steps towards the village of La Chapelle.

The Belval mansion, the largest in the place, inclosed a square court within its four wings.

Approaching the house, the nurse relaxed her pace. The idea occurred to her that hope had deceived her, and that Jeanne had not returned. But driving away such a grievous thought, she resumed her march, and resolutely entered the house by the great door. In a few minutes she had crossed the court, mounted the steps, and pushed in the door of the room where she was most likely to find the child's mother.



II.

A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

MADAM BELVAL, a woman of about thirty years, was alone when the nurse arrived. Having become uneasy at the prolonged absence of her child, she now and then cast an anxious glance through the window which opened on the courtyard.

"Annette," said she quickly, on seeing the nurse, "your walk has been too long——"

But not perceiving her daughter, she rose abruptly, and said :

"Where is Jeanne?"

Annette, who had counted on finding the child at home before her, was struck dumb with grief and terror. Madame Belval, beside herself, repeated the question, adding—

"Answer me, what have you done with my daughter? Why did you not bring her back?"

"Forgive me, Madam," murmured the nurse, falling on her knees, "I am very unhappy."

Mortal anguish was stamped on the pale face of the poor mother; she staggered, and was seized with a nervous tremor which obliged her to sit down again. Her oppressed bosom heaved tumultuously, and she remained a moment speechless. Then, mustering all the strength she could command, she seized Annette's arm, and asked her in a faint voice :

"In Heaven's name, speak; where have you left Jeanne?"

"Alas! the child went away from me," sobbed the nurse in deep affliction.

"In what place?"

"Before the theatre of the Brothers of the Passion."

"And you did not look for her? and you had the heart to return without her? Do you not understand how wrong this negligence is?"

These words were uttered with a violence and rapidity that frightened Annette, so different were they from Madam Belval's usual mildness. Making an effort then to speak, she related every particular of what had passed, what search had been made, and with what little success. Then she strove to exculpate herself.

"Cease to make vain excuses," interrupted Madam Belval; "besides being unseasonable, they are only wasting precious time."

The nurse hung her head in silence. The lady went on: "Arise, and let us go immediately."

"Where do you want to go, Madam?"

"Can you ask?"

"I have done all that any one could do. It is no use searching any more."

"You did not search with a mother's heart," answered Madam Belval. "Follow me to the landit."

Annette rose without replying, and stood ready to accompany the unfortunate mother, who rushed like a mad woman from the house. The two women rap-

idly traversed the streets of the village, and reached the fair-green. Not till then did Madam Belval appear to recover a little self-possession ; she searched every group with her piercing eye, questioned the passers-by and the merchants, examined minutely the stalls and shops into which she went repeatedly to see whether Jeanne was there. Most of those she questioned answered her kindly ; but some shrugged their shoulders, and muttered between their teeth : "Has the woman lost her senses ? How could she think that in this immense crowd, changing every hour, people noticed her daughter ?"

Madam Belval passed a portion of the day in this fruitless search. She traversed the field with feverish impatience, and, according as time wore on, her heart was rent the more ; the gloom of despair darkened her face ; her panting breath, her parched throat, the sweat that bathed her forehead, attested the torments she endured. At last she fell down exhausted and half fainting at the foot of a tree, and these sorrowful words escaped from her colorless lips :

"It is all over now ; I shall never see my darling Jeanne again !"

Then, covering her face with her trembling hands, she burst into sobs and inarticulate cries. Some charitable souls stopped near the unhappy mother, and, after inquiring the cause of her poignant sorrow, went their way in silence.

The night was beginning to wrap the spacious field of the landit in its transparent veil ; the stars already

gemmed the sky ; thousands of torches were lit in front of the shops and along the streets marked on the plain. Madam Belval, knowing that a longer search would be only time lost, rose painfully with Annette's assistance.

"Let us retrace our steps," said she.

As the nurse looked around her with an embarrassed air, the afflicted mother asked :

"Where are we ?"

"I know not," replied Annette.

"How, then, shall I regain my dwelling ?"

"Let us make for the middle of the fair-green, to which the lights will guide us. Once there, we shall be able to make the way home."

"Come, then," said Madam Belval.

And she walked before Annette, who was overwhelmed with sorrow. She blamed herself for the terrible grief that Madam Belval endured ; she thought of what Master Etienne Belval would feel on hearing that his child was lost ; besides, she could not console herself at the idea of seeing no more the innocent creature she had so often danced on her knee.

Madam Belval and the nurse having found their way again, arrived in La Chapelle at two o'clock in the morning. The whole village was in motion ; the report of Jeanne's disappearance had spread quickly amongst the inhabitants, who sincerely esteemed the father and mother on account of their virtues and their kindness of heart. Hence, every one took part

in their misfortune, and many proposed to assist in seeking the lost child.

Scarcely had Madam Belval reached her home when her husband, Master Etienne Belval, in his turn presented himself. Gifted with a mild, engaging countenance, full of candor and sincerity, Belval was about forty-five years of age. He was returning from Paris with his dog, a superb white spaniel, answering to the name of Thoumy.

Master Etienne Belval, astonished by the silence which reigned in his home, and the sadness with which he was welcomed, inquired whether anything had happened, and learned the cruel truth. Idolizing his daughter, he gave a piteous cry, and turned several times in the hall without knowing what he did ; then he darted towards the door.

"Whither would you go, my love?" demanded his wife.

"I want to know what has become of Jeanne."

"It is late now, your search would be in vain."

"No matter. I cannot remain motionless under this roof whilst my beloved child, perhaps, calls me weeping."

And he went away. It was near daylight when he returned sad and dejected.

"There is no hope," he declared in a gloomy voice ; "Jeanne is lost to us."

So saying, he sank rather than seated himself in an arm-chair. Madam Belval answered only by her sobs. The unhappy mother had passed the night

without sleep, lamenting her lost child. Every little while she knelt before the large ivory crucifix which adorned her chamber and prayed with great fervor.

The sorrowing parents resolved to renew their search at sunrise. They were preparing to set out together when a gentle knock was heard at the door. Etienne Belval went himself to open it, and a man of forty, or thereabouts, entered with a smile on his lips. Elegantly dressed, easy in his manners, George Herielle, a rich goldsmith of the city, came regularly every month to visit the Belval family, to whom he was united by the closest ties of friendship. A widower and without children, he had asked to hold Jeanne at the baptismal font, and he loved his goddaughter as much as though she were of his own blood.

George arrived early, as he usually did, in order to give his friends and his charming goddaughter a longer day. He presented himself, then, his face radiant with joy, his hands full of *bonbons*, toys, and trinkets; he exulting the while in the pleasure he was going to give Jeanne. He was always welcomed with delight, and his coming made a joyous festival in the house of Master Belval.

So the worthy man was no little surprised by the gloomy sadness he read in the faces of the master and mistress of the house. His eyes immediately sought his goddaughter, and not seeing her he became uneasy.

He was soon made acquainted with the sad event

of the previous day. George was no less affected than the child's parents, and tears rolled down his cheeks. Having recovered the first shock, he said to Etienne Belval :

" We must not remain inactive in presence of such a misfortune ; let us continue the search."

" What can be done ?" asked Belval and his wife dejectedly.

" Have you apprised the fair police ?"

" Not yet ; I intended doing so."

" That is the first thing to be done. Let us hasten."

The two friends went out and repaired to the police who at once set about making a general search. Besides, using his influence with the Provost of the city, Herielle informed him of Belval's misfortune, and the magistrate placed at George's disposal his numerous sergeants-at-arms.

With these powerful means of action, an active search was made, not only in the plain of St. Denis, but even in the latter city and its environs. Nothing came of it ; not even the slightest trace was found that could lead to any discovery. As there was no account of any accident in that part of the country, they concluded that Jeanne had not perished, but that she had been carried off, a common thing at that period, when all evils seemed to burst at once on France—foreign war, civil war, the plague of *great companies* and many others.

Forced to renounce the hope of finding Jeanne, Etienne Belval, his wife and George Herielle were

sitting sadly together four days after the catastrophe. They lost themselves in conjectures as to who might have carried off the child, and confessed that God alone could restore her to them.

Thoumy, the faithful dog, the favorite and constant companion of Jeanne's sports,—the child loved to bury her little plump arms in the silky fur of the faithful animal,—Thoumy seemed to share the general grief. He jumped or barked no more. Lying in a corner, his eyes fixed on the door, he awaited the return of his young mistress. The birds themselves were sad; accustomed to pick their food from Jeanne's hand, they now remained silent in their cage and sang no more. The flowers which the lovely child used to tend so fondly, deprived of the water she had been wont to distribute to them, hung their languishing heads and seemed about to perish.

On the child's little bed her playthings, still unmoved, reminded every one of her and of their loss.

A mournful silence had reigned for some moments in the apartment, when a heavy and measured step was heard without; the door opened, giving admission to a man of some fifty years, of a mild yet austere countenance, clad in the brown habit of the Cordeliers.

‘Father Grambert!’ cried the three in a breath.

“Even so, my friends,” answered the religious, bending his head gravely and sadly; “may God assist you!”

The monk was the director of the family which he had known for a long time. He had baptized Jeanne, to whom he was much attached. Having learned the fatal news he hastened to console the unhappy parents of the child. Knowing that it was useless to recall hope to those sorrowing souls, he spoke to them only of Christian resignation, and said :

"The trial the Lord sends you is a cruel one, I confess; but divine grace will not be wanting to you."

Heartrending sighs were the only answer. Father Grambert added : "Bow down, then, like the holy man Job under the hand of the Almighty. He has taken from you the treasure He had given you ; submit yourselves to His holy will."

"We have not the patriarch's strength," sighed Etienne Belval, "and hope even is not permitted us : we have lost our child forever. Perchance death were preferable for her."

"What do you mean ?"

"Who knows into what hands she has fallen ?"

"The Lord, who hath care of even the smallest plant, and watcheth even over the insect hidden beneath the grass, will not abandon an innocent creature made to His likeness. Besides, every human means of finding Jeanne are not exhausted."

"Hitherto those we have employed have been useless."

"We must persevere," said Father Grambert ; "George and I will try again."

"Will you succeed any better? I fear not."

"The Father is right," said Herielle; with persevering courage and Heaven's aid many difficulties may be overcome."

Master Belval and his wife shook their head with an incredulous air. Grambert resumed in an inspired tone:

"Yes, I repeat it, for such is my conviction; Jeanne shall be restored to you."

"When shall we see her again?" demanded M. Belval, moved by the words of the religious.

"I know not; it is not given me to read in the future the hour or the day."

"What do you purpose doing?" inquired the unhappy mother.

"I will visit the hospitals, and all the places of public refuge. I will interrogate the numerous inhabitants of St. Denis whom I know. On his side, George Herielle, whose relations are more extensive, will actively second my efforts. It is hard to say, but we may obtain some information."

"Let us not waste time in vain discourse," suggested George. "Let us set out at once."

Father Grambert rose with his friend, and both, taking leave of Master Belval and his afflicted spouse, set out to commence new investigations. They left the unfortunate parents more calm, and with some glimmerings of hope.

III.

THE WANDERERS.

It is now time to explain how Jeanne Belval had disappeared. Annette had taken her to the theatre of the Brothers of the Passion. There, for some time, the nurse kept the child raised on her arms, so that she might see at her ease paradise, hell, Christ, the saints and the devils which the drama represented.

Soon fatigued, Annette placed Jeanne on the ground, charging her to keep still beside her. The child, tired of seeing nothing of the drama, moved away from her guardian, without the latter, pressed by the crowd, observing her. By degrees the little girl got out of the circle that surrounded the theatre, and found herself in front of a magnificent shop sparkling with numerous and splendid toys. Jeanne stopped to examine this collection, and smiled with pleasure to see so many pretty things. She remained a while as it were entranced in presence of these wonders. Then she began to wish, and, thinking herself still beside her nurse, she turned to speak to her.

But, instead of Annette, it was a tall, muscular man who presented himself to her view. He had long, thick hair, a bushy beard, and fierce, swarthy features. This personage, who was observing the child, bent suddenly over her so that his face touched her forehead.

Jeanne, frightened, threw herself back quickly, to avoid the touch of the unknown. But the latter, laying his large hand on the child's glossy head, held her fast, and said, with an attempt at a smile :

"I see, child, many of these things please you. Show me which of them you like best and I will get it for you."

The little girl, surprised and confounded, looked from the stranger's face to the tempting display in the stall, and appeared undecided. At length she drew near the store, and timidly pointed to a superb card-sheep, all covered with white wool, and whose glass eyes sparkled in the sun. The man with the black beard took down the toy, paid the price demanded, and offered it to Jeanne, who, divided between the wish to possess it and the fear of doing wrong, asked :

"Will Annette allow me to take it?"

"Don't be afraid," answered the unknown ; "not only will she not scold you, but she will be delighted to see you with such a beautiful toy."

"Are you sure?" asked the child in her simple way.

"She told me so."

"In that case, give me the sheep."

The stranger gave it to her, and Jeanne seized it by the fleece, jumping with joy ; she kissed it a hundred times, caressed it and regarded it with admiration.

"Come with me," said the unknown at the end of

a few minutes, "I will show you ever so many fine things."

"And my nurse?" asked Jeanne, casting a long look at the dense crowd in front of the theatre.

"Your nurse asked me to go with you and show you some of the fair."

"I should like to have her with us."

"We shall come back for her by and by."

The child gave her hand to this obliging personage, who led her from shop to shop, and bought her more toys. Jeanne, in her delight, did not perceive that she was going farther and farther from the place where she had left Annette. Still, after some time she began to appear uneasy, and cried to go back to her nurse.

"She is coming," said the unknown.

"Will she come soon?"

"Very soon."

"Is it now?"

"Yes, when we get as far as that shop below yonder in the plain," and he pointed to a vast shed of singular form, standing alone. He walked rapidly towards it, drawing the child with him; when they reached the door she asked:

"Where is Annette?"

"She is waiting for us."

At the same time the stranger raised a rude curtain which concealed the entrance, and penetrated with his young companion into the interior.

The place which the man and the child had just

entered presented a singular aspect, very different from anything else on the fair-green. The huts it contained, constructed of planks, affected strange fantastic forms, and were still more distinguished by their want of cleanliness than their irregularity. Rubbish of every sort, bones half picked, remains of food, the smoke of animals shut up in the sheds, all that, within the inclosure, rotted away under the burning sun of August, and spread contagion around. Dogs went growling and burrowing through these filthy offals, often quarrelling tooth and nail over a piece of rotten meat.

The costume and the physiognomy of the tenants of these miserable dens was in keeping with the places they inhabited. Clothed in short tunics, the head covered with a sort of cap, they wore a woollen mantle of the coarsest texture, fastened to the left shoulder.

Their skin, add the chroniclers of the time, was of a deep yellow, their hair dark and crisp; from their ears hung enormous rings of jet or silver. The children, half naked, crouched or rolled on the ground, whilst women and boys cooked in the open air, in iron saucepans, most of them wanting handles.

The man who had brought Jeanne was not clothed like the inhabitants of this strange place: but his features, his manners were the same, and he spoke fluently their rude and energetic idiom. Moreover, it was easy to perceive, from the marks of deference he received on his way, that he enjoyed high authority

amongst them. He passed along through the rows of cabins without troubling himself to return the greetings addressed to him on every side.

Jeanne trembled, notwithstanding the caresses lavished upon her by her officious guide, and she could not help crying out when he ushered her into so strange a place.

This habitation, cleaner, higher, better constructed than the others, arose at the farther end of the encampment. The large and regular room into which the man and the child entered was lit only by an opening of a foot square, cut in the wooden partition.

The room had no other furniture than a large table rudely fashioned, and three wooden stools. Two women occupied the two first seats. One, who appeared at least seventy, and was half bent with age, was making a willow basket; her features denoted idiocy; she kept continually moving her lips, from which no sound escaped, and her fixed eyes never turned to see what was passing around her.

The other woman, who might be about thirty-five, was of a tall and elegant figure. On her features were still the remains of great beauty faded by misery or vice. In the depths of her black eyes shone a lurid light; her raven hair shaded her face, which was of a dead marble white. A jet necklace encircled her neck; she wore bracelets of the same material, which made the more apparent the alabaster whiteness of her arms.

The two women were clad in robes of coarse stuff,

of strange shape, checkered with many colors, in which red predominated.

The younger was playing with an ebony-handled stiletto which hung by a silver chain from her girdle. The harshest indifference was painted on her face as she watched a little girl of some five years old who lay lifeless on a miserable pallet. The child, wrapped in rags, must have lain there some hours, for her limbs had already the rigidity of death. Notwithstanding her paleness and emaciation, she was lovely still, and, strange to say, looked very much like Jeanne Belval : the same figure, the same color of hair, the same size.

The stranger went straight to the woman with the stiletto, and presented the child he had brought.

"Have I succeeded well?" he asked.

"Perfectly," answered the woman, casting a penetrating look on Jeanne.

"What say you to the likeness?"

"It is marvellous."

A proud smile curled the man's lips as he walked towards the bed of death, leaving the child with the woman. The latter resumed :

"Hast thou not been imprudent?"

"I think not."

"Did no one see thee?"

"Surely no."

"Thou knowest what a terrible punishment would befall us if this were discovered?"

"Be not afraid ; no suspicion will fall on us. I

am no novice in the trade. Besides, we shall take every possible precaution."

Whilst the man spoke thus, the woman with the stiletto had taken Jeanne by both her hands, and drawn her close to her, as if to see her the better. But the child, frightened at the stranger's looks, screamed and struggled.

"What have I done to you, little one?" asked the woman in a harsh tone.

"Let me go! let me go!" cried Jeanne.

"Where do you want to go?"

"I want to go to my mother's house."

"This is it."

"No, it is not; the house where I live is much finer."

"Be silent!" cried the man, annoyed by the child's cries.

"I will go home," said Jeanne sobbing.

"You shall stay here, and if you make any more noise you shall be well beaten."

The little girl, frightened by this threat, was silent for some moments; but soon, unable to contain herself longer, she again burst forth into tears and sobs. Thereupon the woman with the stiletto laid her hand roughly on her mouth, so as to stifle her cries.

As for the man, he began to strip the child that lay lifeless on the bed. Having finished this operation, he rolled the little body in the rags that served for its covering, and gave the clothes he had taken off to the woman, his accomplice, who put them on

Jeanne. That done, the man took the daughter of Etienne Belval and placed her on the pallet. As the child redoubled her cries, he brutally struck her, and thus forced her into silence.

Seeing her motionless and terror-struck, he took up the corpse he had laid on the ground, and went away.

During this revolting scene the aged crone did not appear to pay a moment's attention to what was passing around her. Engaged in weaving willow, she kept silently moving her lips, sometimes shaking her head. Was she deaf, or completely idiotic? one or the other might be supposed. Had she consciousness of what was going on around her? Her impossible attitude made it very unlikely. However it was, she made no other motion than what her work required.

At the end of two hours, the man who had taken Jeanne away returned, clothed now like one of the people of the country, and leading by the hand a little boy and girl, who advanced quickly into the room. The little boy, about six years old, was strong, well made and intelligent looking. The little girl, about the same age as her companion, was strangely like the dead child, and consequently Jeanne Belval.

The man who brought them in led them to Jeanne's bed, and they threw themselves on the child's neck to embrace her; but she repulsed them, and turned away so as not to see them.

"Little sister," said the boy kindly and compassionately, "do you still suffer?"

And as Jeanne kept silent, and covered her face with her little arms, he added :

"It is a long time since we were allowed to see you, and you receive us so on our first visit. It is not well."

He was going on, when the man said to him ; "Your sister is not quite recovered yet, so you must not fatigue her."

"Father, let us stay with her a little while," said the boy beseechingly.

"It would be imprudent," replied the unknown ; "do not deprive her of her rest."

And without more ado, he took away the two children, who turned more than once, with sorrowful hearts, towards her whom they thought their sister. The man, after taking them to another part of the inclosure, traversed the encampment, and directed his steps towards the last row of cabins that bordered on the street. The night was come, and torches, lamps and lanterns, were being lit on every side. The curious crowd, which had kept aloof during the day, was now beginning to gather.

In those strange huts there was no merchandise for sale. Visitors, nevertheless, glided in one by one and then went forth, some joyful, others sad and discontented, according to the words they had heard, which pretended to foretell the future.

In fact, the singular population of the place we

have been describing announced themselves as able to reveal the future to whoever wished to consult them. These fortune-tellers, a species of mendicants, then for the first time seen in France, had arrived some days before at La Chapelle with the merchants of the landit. They were called *Egyptians* and *Penoncia*, or Penitentiaries; these two last names had their origin in the fable related by these adventurers introducing themselves into Christian countries.

They were natives, they said, of Lower Egypt, and had been forced by the Saracens to abjure the religion of Jesus Christ. Reconquered by the Christians, they had gone to Rome, in order to obtain absolution for their apostacy. The Pope, having confessed them, had given them for penance to go seven years wandering through the world, without ever sleeping in a bed. But, in order that they might not die of hunger, he had sent them bulls ordering all the bishops or archbishops they should meet on their way to give them ten pounds, Tours currency, by way of alms.

Such was the first appearance of that mysterious race of men who afterwards received the name of *Bohemians*, because they were said to have sojourned in Bohemia. They long infested France and England. They were subsequently found in the mountains of Spain under the name of *Gitanos*, in those of Calabria under that of *Zingarri*. Some of their descendants still practise on the credulity of the southern provinces of France.

When the Egyptians came into France, they were, they said, in the fifth year of their penance. They were impudent liars, for they abhorred Christianity, and secretly practised idolatry, or, rather, despised all positive religion.

They reached Paris in two troops at the time we have mentioned, and, by order of the magistrates, they established themselves near the village of La Chapelle, on the place set apart for the landit fair.

There they gave out that they could foretell good or bad fortunes. Immediately the Parisians, especially the women, hastened to visit these impostors, receiving their words as so many oracles.



IV.

TWELVE YEARS AFTER.

TIME rolled on, bearing with it in its rapid course both men and things. Twelve years have passed away since the events related above. The village of La Chapelle has undergone but little change. At the entrance still stands the dwelling of Etienne Belval; but it is sad and solitary; joy is absent from it, for Jeanne never returned.

The interior of that graceful abode has not changed: the internal arrangements have remained the same, the furniture is placed as of old, and desolation reigns as deep as ever in the hearts of the owners.

Thoumy, the old companion of Jeanne, lies near the hearth, on a soft cushion, with drooping head and downcast eye; the poor animal seems still to remember his young mistress and mourn her loss; he would even seem to be more mindful of it than a human being.

The volery is still there; but not so the winged minstrels that once dwelt within it; death struck them one after the other, and they were never replaced.

The flower-stands likewise occupy their ancient place; the plants that garnished them, whose sweet perfume once embalmed the air, are faded, withered, and their dust carried away by the wind.

Jeanne's couch has not been displaced. An object

of pious veneration, it remained just as the child left it the day her parents were so cruelly bereaved. A statuette of the Blessed Virgin, placed in a little niche beside the bed, wears round its neck the remains of the last wreath wherewith the little girl had decked it.

These details show plainly enough that the unfortunate parents of Jeanne live faithful to the memory of their sad misfortune, and that time has not softened the bitterness of their grief.

Master Etienne Belval, although still under sixty, has almost the appearance of decay. Tribulation has blanched his hair; his limbs have lost their vigor; his look is sad and subdued; his face is furrowed with wrinkles, and his lips smile no more: a premature old age has broken down the iron constitution of Etienne Belval.

Sorrow has left no lighter traces on the face of Madam Belval. Still, the virtuous woman has bowed under the hand of God, and has borne with admirable resignation the blow that struck her. In the ardor of her Christian faith, she adores the impenetrable ways of Providence.

Annette, a widow and without children, has grown old with her afflicted master and mistress, weeping with them the disappearance of Jeanne, and daily accusing herself of the catastrophe that bereft them of their child. The day following the child's disappearance she wanted to go and consult the Egyptians; but Etienne Belval and his wife were opposed to it,

and Father Grambert ordered her to give up that guilty thought.

The day on which we take up the thread of our story, George Herielle and the good monk had come to visit the inconsolable family. Jeanne soon became, as usual, the subject of conversation.

"If she be living," said George, "she must be tall and handsome."

"She would adorn this dwelling by her virtues and her virginal beauty," said the friar.

Silently did Etienne Belval listen to these words, which awoke sad memories in his heart. Nevertheless, he took pleasure in hearing the name of his beloved child pronounced ; he seemed to see the all but worshipped image floating in a mysterious mist. Although he had lost every ray of hope of ever finding his daughter, he sometimes felt relieved by the silent contemplation of the past.

During the first years which followed Jeanne's disappearance Master Belval had kept up the search ; he went through a portion of France, seeking his child everywhere ; then he returned home, to die, he said, under the roof where his daughter was born.

At times Father Grambert tried to revive hope in that sorrow-worn heart ; but Etienne always answered :

"Father, you cannot succeed in beguiling me with vain illusions ; I know I shall never see my daughter more. She will not be here to close my dying eyes ; no child of mine shall weep over my grave."

The monk and George Herielle were forced to ad-

mit that Etienne was right, and that his misfortune was irrevocable. For several years had those two devoted friends omitted nothing that might lead to the discovery of Jeanne, but all their efforts were in vain.

Nevertheless, the day in question Father Grambert had presented himself with a smiling countenance. It was because a ray of hope had returned to the holy man, and he hastened to communicate it to his friends.

"I bring you good news," said he.

"Alas!" sighed Master Belval, "there is but one piece of intelligence that could revive my heart, and that is impossible."

"I understand you, but mind I do not consider the child's return as impossible. A circumstance has occurred that somehow revives my hope that God will restore your daughter to you."

"To what do you allude?" demanded Etienne, whose curiosity was a moment excited.

"To my approaching departure."

"Ah! if you leave us it will be but another source of affliction."

"On the contrary, the journey I am about to take ought to inspire you with some hope."

"Whither do you go?"

"I am going to preach in the South of France."

"How can that mission with which you are charged, Father, have any happy result for us?"

"Can you not guess?"

"Truly, no!"

"And yet you know that we have never had any search made in those distant provinces in regard to your daughter. My presence there will enable me to make active inquiries. I have a sort of presentiment that we shall be more successful there than elsewhere."

"I doubt it," replied Etienne, shaking his head.

"Providence often hears our prayers when we least expect it; it seems, as it were, to prepare agreeable surprises for us."

"If the vague hope you have conceived were realized, I should have nothing more to desire on earth," said Etienne, in a tremulous voice. "But instead of that I look for other trials."

"What is your thought?" inquired Father Grambert astonished.

"It is of you I speak, servant of God."

"Explain yourself; I do not understand you."

"Well! when you set out to exercise your holy apostolate far away, I am ever fearful that you may sink under the toils and hardships of the mission. Your indefatigable zeal imposes silence on nature, and so you waste your life. What a misfortune it would be for us to lose you,—you, our consoling angel!"

"You are the man of dismal forebodings," replied the monk with a gentle smile.

"You will own, Father, that I have good reason not to forget how terrible are human vicissitudes."

"We are all in the hands of God; He has marked

the term of our career. If He is pleased to take me to Himself, may His holy will be done!"

Saying these words, the monk raised his eyes to heaven with an angelic expression; a ray of eternal beatitude seemed to illumine his aged countenance, and rest on his snow-white locks. Master Belval saw it and it grieved him as a threat of approaching separation.

"You sigh after the reward," murmured he, "but when we shall not have you to console us, what shall become of us?"

"The Lord, my son," answered Father Grambert, "never fails any of His creatures. And then our friend Herielle will not desert you."

Perceiving that Belval and his wife remained sad and silent, he added:

"Wherefore do you give yourselves up to fears which nothing at present justifies? I am setting out on a short journey, and I shall return speedily. Who knows but I may bring you good tidings?"

These words were heard in silence, and the monk rose, affectionately blessed the husband and wife, commended them to George, and retired.

After the departure of the monk, Master Belval and his wife appeared overwhelmed, and the worthy goldsmith could not succeed in assuaging their grief.

V.

ARRIVAL OF THE TRIBE.

WHILST Father Grambert was preparing to set out for the South, a singular circumstance occurred at St. Germined, a small town of Roussillon. That town, with a population of about one thousand, built not far from the shores of the blue-waved Mediterranean, saw with surprise a band of strange, fantastic figures winding beneath its walls.

A dozen horsemen, clothed like the Egyptians of whom we have spoken, advanced in front. Others led heavy wagons drawn by horses strangely harnessed. In these long vehicles, covered with cow-skins and strewn with straw, were seen heaped pell-mell, women, children, animals, glasses, bottles and all sorts of household utensils.

Some were singing, or rather howling; others were playing large cymbals, or beating time on large tambourines of dog's leather.

Surprised by this singular array, the inhabitants of St. Germined thought for a moment that these might be the *Enfants sans-souci*, mountebanks who were beginning to go through the country. But the face, the language, the deportment of the newcomers soon undeceived them.

Then the capitoul,* a simple and ignorant man,

* A municipal officer of Toulouse.

who had never been out of his own city, accosted the first horseman, regarding him as the head of the troop. It was the man we saw at the fair of the *landit*, who had carried off Jeanne Belval.

"Who are you?" demanded the magistrate.

"The chief of the Egyptians."

"I know nothing of them," declared the magistrate.

"We are poor Christians, expelled from Egypt by the Mussulmans, whom may God confound!"

And the stranger repeated the fable he had formerly palmed off on entering France. He added certain variations which much amazed the good people of St. Germined.

"Where are you going in this way?" inquired the magistrate.

"Condemned to wander through the world, in order to accomplish the penance imposed upon us, we have no fixed end in our travels. We leave it all to Providence, and we station ourselves wherever we find the best welcome."

"Have you any intention of remaining amongst us?" demanded the capitoul, not without some uneasiness.

"Precisely. But fear nothing, we shall be a burden to no one."

"What are your means of living?"

"We work."

"I would be curious to know your profession; for I see no sign of any in your baggage."

"We are learned soothsayers ; we reveal the future to all who wish to know it. With your leave, good sir, we will stay here a while and show you what we can do."

"I willingly consent," replied the capitoul.

In the depth of his province, the worthy magistrate knew nothing of the severe decrees recently enacted against the Egyptians. But even if he had been aware of it, it is probable that the desire of testing the marvellous knowledge of these strangers would have prevailed over duty.

The inhabitants of St. Germined had no more idea than their capitoul of who or what the Egyptians were ; they saw and heard them there for the first time. Far from suspecting that they were charged by the church with the bonds of anathema and pursued by royal edicts, they gave entire credence to their words.

At the period of which we write, the Egyptians were nothing more than fugitives ; they stopped but a short time in the same place. Pursued by excommunication and proscription, they avoided the great centres of population.

For several years they had kept away from Paris and its vicinity, and their doings at La Chapelle had cost them dear. Having faith in these impostors, the Parisians blindly did their bidding. Hence arose divisions in families, underhand dealings, unheard-of disturbances. The scandal became so great that the Bishop of Paris went to the village of La Chapelle, accompanied by Father Grambert.

From the height of a stand erected on the plain the friar preached with force and earnestness against these strangers. By order of the Pontiff, he pronounced the penalty of excommunication against those who showed their hands to the pretended soothsayers, or who believed in the truth of their lying predictions.

The Egyptians, deprived of custom, and frightened at the rigorous search that was going on for Belval's daughter, decamped from the town of La Chapelle at the end of ten days, after having committed a number of robberies.

Notwithstanding the severe penalties imposed on these adventurers, other bands speedily replaced the first, and invaded France and England. It required the most terrible ordinances to repress them. The troop that had carried off Jeanne continued for twelve years its wicked trade and its peregrinations. But at the time of its appearance at St. Germined, it was reduced to fourscore members; disease, bloody quarrels, and the agents of justice had cut off the rest.

It took up its position to the right of the town, at the foot of a chain of hills sloping towards the sea. The Egyptians, having stopped in the midst of the wondering crowd that had followed them, unsaddled their horses, unloaded the wagons, drove down stakes for the tents, or posts for the sheds, spread the canvas and the skins, nailed on the planks, and were soon

under shelter; they then prepared to exercise their art at the expense of the credulous people.

Forced to change their residence often to escape the fury of their dupes, they hastened to make the most of public credulity. The Egyptians were far from possessing the romantic and all but heroic character which many imaginative people have been pleased to lend them freely. Even at the time of their greatest prosperity, they lived as miserable bandits; greedy, indolent to excess, addicted to all vices, they formed the worst kind of mountebanks; they cheated and defrauded without remorse; crime and the most shameful means of accomplishing their ends were to them good. There is an infinite distance between this portrait, drawn by impartial history, and those wandering, enterprising adventurers, painted by fancy, full of stoicism, loving only danger, liberty, and independence.

As soon as these vagabonds, like a flock of birds of prey, lighted anywhere, they were seen, crouched on the threshold of their huts, calling the passers-by; or else they ran through the crowd, holding out their hand like beggars.

At St. Germined they showed themselves faithful to their habits. They seized the hands of their visitors, inspected every line, examined their faces, and from them foretold future events.

The chief, whom they called their duke, and treated with the most profound respect, had his dwelling in the midst of the encampment; it was distinguished

from all the others, and naturally attracted a more considerable crowd. Himself, strangely attired, showed himself on a high stage, whence he harangued the crowd.

The spectators, answering to his appeal, crowded into the dwelling of this man, who fleeced them with the aid of a confederate. At his side appeared a youth of some eighteen years, with a frank and open countenance, beating away on a big drum ; his bright, quick glances denoted intelligence : it was the boy of whom we had a passing glimpse at the landit fair, near the pallet on which Jeanne had been thrown.

Against the wall of the shed, not far from the chief, leaned two young girls of seventeen or thereabouts, fair, graceful, elegant, even under their fantastic and strangely-bedizened garb. One was the former companion of the little boy, and the other the daughter of Master Etienne Belval. Time had singularly changed their physiognomy. Now their complexion was dark, their features strongly marked, and impressed with no common charms. The long journeys, the fatigues of a wandering, hard and restless life, had contributed to metamorphis them so. Otherwise they still retained their marvellous resemblance one to the other, so that it would have been impossible to discover which was Jeanne.

By the way in which the two girls looked at each other and intertwined their bare, bracelettted arms, it was easy to see that they loved each other like real sisters. Contrary to the practice of those of their

sex in the rest of the camp, they took no part in the exercises of fortune-telling. They had neither the impudence nor the shameless language of their companions, and their faces showed that they disapproved of the wicked trade going on in their presence.

The chief of the Egyptians saw with anger this disapproval of theirs. Several times he approached the girls with a wrathful air, and ordered them to bestir themselves; but they did not obey. The presence of the spectators prevented the duke from manifesting his displeasure; nevertheless, the lurid lightning flashing from his eyes, the convulsive trembling of his lips, the livid paleness of his face, betrayed the sentiments that agitated him.

Night being come, the crowd dispersed, and solitude reigned around the dwelling of the chief.

"Daniel," said he to the youth at his side, "our day's work is over; let us go in."

"Father, I obey you," answered the youth, unfastening his drum from the post to which it was tied.

Silence was instantly restored in the camp, a moment before so tumultuous.



VI.

A DOMESTIC SCENE.

THE two girls had gone into the cabin before the Egyptian. They found there the two women we have described in one of the preceding chapters, when relating the abduction of Jeanne. The younger had changed considerably ; the remains of her beauty were gone ; her face, ravaged by the passions, presented a satanic expression. Hers was the task of telling the fortune of those credulous customers sent in by the master.

Scarcely had the two young Bohemians entered when the chief appeared, his lip foaming with rage and his eye flashing fire.

"Now," cried he, addressing his victims, "we are going to settle accounts." And he threw himself on a wooden seat.

"Will you always go on playing with my power?" he said with increasing violence. "Every one in the tribe trembles before Lénor Eschol; every one, great or small, weak or strong, bows down before the duke of the Bohemians, and you dare to brave me?"

"You accuse us wrongfully, father," answered one of the girls, who wore a paste necklace, whilst her companion's neck was adorned with jet beads.

"Have you not hitherto resisted me? who could bear such obstinacy any longer?"

"We do not act through caprice, nor with the intention of offending you," said very gently the Bohemian with the paste necklace.

"Do you dare to excuse yourselves? this beats everything, and, I warn you, I can stand your disobedience no longer."

The girls hung their heads in silence, with a sad and resigned air.

"What prevents you," went on the chief, "from doing as the other women and girls of the tribe do? each of them takes her share, as she ought, in the common work."

"We cannot follow their example," said the Bohemian with the paste necklace.

"The reason, an' it please you?"

"Their conduct and their morals appear to us reprehensible."

"Do you condemn them?"

"They are free to act as they please. We only claim the same right for ourselves."

"And think you that I am going to feed you unless you earn your bread like the rest of us? If you were born in a castle, in sooth, it would be all well enough, but belonging to our wandering tribe, you ought to share our labors."

"Give us some honest work, and we will not refuse to apply ourselves to it."

"You accuse me, do you?" growled the chief. "Beware, wretched girls! the bonds that unite us shall not screen you from my revenge!"

"We do not mean to offend you," murmured the girl with the jet necklace.

"Every word you speak is an insult, and yet you declare you do not mean to offend me? I tell you it is too much!"

The Egyptian's voice waxed deeper and hoarser, his gestures more threatening, and the girls began to tremble. He added with a diabolical sneer:

"Forsooth, I ought to put you in a convent! You are opposed to following the trade of your father, and of Judith, your mother!"

"The practices you propose to us, God and virtue condemn," said the girl with the paste necklace.

This answer enraged Lénor Eschol beyond all bounds; he jumped from his seat to the middle of the room, his eyes flashing fire, his face convulsed with passion, his fists shut, and he cried in a paroxysm of rage:

"Heard ever any one the like? what! is it to me you speak of God and virtue, as if I cared for those things! never shall those accursed names be spoken again under my roof, and you shall pay dear for your rashness!"

So saying, the duke of the Bohemians was about to rush on the two adoptive sisters, when a new actor appeared on the scene, which was about to become tragic. Daniel appeared on the threshold, and the girls, wild with terror, darted towards him claiming his protection. The young man threw himself before

them, extended one hand to defend them, and with the other he stopped Léonor.

"Father," said he in a firm and decisive tone, "leave my sisters in peace."

"Begone," roared the duke of the Bohemians, "begone, I say ! let me work my will !"

"What would you do ?"

"Chastise refractory children."

"Would you kill them ?"

"What is that to you ? Have I not a right to do as I please ?"

"I do not dispute it."

"Well ! be off at once !"

"I will, if you must have it so. But first let me say one word."

"Speak !"

"The day that one of my sisters fell under your blows, I would be capable of revenging her death in your blood. That's what I had to tell you."

"Would you not shrink from such a crime ?"

"I fear not," replied Daniel with terrible composure.

Léonor stood with folded arms before the young man. He grew pale at this threat, and he anxiously scanned his son's face. The features of the young Bohemian had undergone no sort of change ; only his fine forehead was slightly wrinkled, and his dark eyes flashed with unwonted fire. The chief knew the indomitable strength and energy of Daniel ; he knew that the youth always did what he said he would do, and he drew back a step.

"So," he murmured, "I am no longer the master here! In vain does the whole tribe follow no other law than my will; at home, in my own family, I meet opposition, rebellion that I cannot put down!"

Then, addressing himself directly to the young man, he said :

"Do you refuse to submit to my authority?"

"No such thing, my father!"

"Then it is for me to punish my disobedient daughters as they deserve."

"As you please, but you shall not do it before me."

"Respect your father, O my son! On your account I will forgive Méryem."

"Why not also Jenny?"

"Have you forgotten all the trouble she has given me?"

"Suppose I remember nothing of it?" said Daniel in an ironical tone.

"Jenny has rejected the ways, the practices, the traditions, the belief of our tribe."

"What harm is that?"

"Do you ask me such a question?"

"Yes, I would be fain to know."

"Do you count as nothing her allowing herself to be perverted by the Christians?"

"Every one should be allowed freedom of conscience."

"Your sister did not stop there: she made Méryem the accomplice of her fault, and she will end by drawing yourself away, if I don't put a stop to it."

"Méryem is as free as Jenny ; why do you torment the girls in this way ?"

"You take things easy," said Lénor with bitter emphasis. "Méryem, whom I have loved more than her sister, whom I have loaded with caresses, to treat me so ! Doth not such ingratitude deserve severe censure, and have I not a right to complain ?"

"Father, I have heard enough of this matter. Let Jenny and Méryem be Christians, it matters little to us. But what is of importance to me, at least, yea, what I value beyond all price, is the affection of my sisters. Now, I maintain, because I have often had proof of it, that they both love me, and I love them in return. Hence, to touch a hair of their heads would be to touch the apple of my eye."

The chief of the Bohemians insisted no more after this declaration, as plain as it was firm. He dismissed Jenny and Méryem with an imperious gesture, and took his son with him to another apartment of their dwelling.

Daniel alone, with his mother Judith, the proud duchess of the Egyptians, exercised any influence over Lénor Eschol. Endowed with extraordinary strength of body, with rare ability, with admirable candor and sincerity, he had gained, by the gentleness of his manners, the affection of most of the Bohemians. Moreover, by right of birth, he was to succeed their chief in command of the tribe.

The young man never abused his rising influence ; naturally kind and generous, he cherished his sisters,

whose protector and defender he, on all occasions, constituted himself. The union of those three souls, their mutual tenderness, their amiable disposition, subdued all the degraded beings of whom the band was composed.

Daniel had always treated the two girls as sisters, never dreaming that they were connected with him by no tie of kindred. Neither did they any more suspect it. Belval's daughter had completely forgotten her infant years; she thought she had been born amongst the Bohemians.

Till the age of ten years the three children received the usual education of the tribe, that is to say, they were left without instruction of any kind, religious or moral. At that period Jenny was initiated, by a Providential circumstance, in the doctrines of Christianity. The seed fell on excellent soil, and immediately produced the best of fruit. Not content with enjoying the blessing of faith, and practising as faithfully as her situation permitted, the duties of religion, she would make her sister a sharer in her happiness; she converted Méryem.

Lénor Eschol, having noticed the change in the two children, was terribly angry, and commanded them to renounce Christ. On their refusing, he treated them most cruelly. Young as they were the two sisters bravely endured this increasing persecution. Faithful to the teachings of the Gospel, they abstained from the practices of divination, and gave

the Bohemians no more assistance. Threats, hard privations, even blows, did not shake their resolution. Strengthened by aid from above they preserved intact the deposit of faith, and God rewarded them for their generosity by abundant consolations.



VII.

THE SICK WOMAN.

ALTHOUGH the wrath of Lénor Eschol was dreadful, it was less so to the two sisters than the constant, implacable animosity of Judith. Hard and vindictive by nature, the Bohemian was passionately attached to the idolatrous practices of her tribe.

The duchess mortally hated Christianity, because it condemned the superstitions of her race and the vices to which the adventurers gave themselves up. Hence, when once she knew that Jenny and Mériem were Christians, she spared them no cruelty; her fruitful imagination multiplied occasions of annoying and persecuting them. She acted coolly, deliberately, and tortured the girls in a thousand different ways. The patience and gentleness of her victims increased her hatred, and she filled them incessantly with new bitterness.

When the chief and Daniel had quitted the room she occupied, Judith cast a malignant look on the two sisters and said to them:

“ What is the meaning of this idleness? are we all at your service?”

“ Mother, what can we do?” timidly asked Jenny.

“ Prepare the evening meal,” sharply replied Eschol’s wife.

The young girls obeyed without saying a word. On the marches, in the halts and in the encampments, Judith always gave them the hardest work to do. Often were they fainting and exhausted from sheer fatigue, so that they could with great difficulty go through with the heavy tasks imposed upon them. They bore this pitiless treatment without a murmur, without ever uttering a complaint.

The Bohemians, daily witnesses of the eminent virtues of these two young girls, could not help esteeming them, and were always glad to receive a visit from them. When a woman or child of the tribe fell ill, one of the two sisters hastened to go and do what she could for them. They thus did much good amongst their wretched companions, and they would have done more were it not for the continual surveillance of Judith, Lénor Eschol, and especially Toby Spiller, the spy and evil genius of the chief.

Toby Spiller, one of the worst vagabonds of the tribe, had neither hearth nor home; he lived without family and without friends, lying, now under a wagon, now under the penthouse of a shed or on the threshold of a tent. He was fed by the crumbs from Lénor's table, and in return gave the chief the benefit of his dark, astute mind. His special mission was never to lose sight of the two girls.

Judith's aged companion, to whom we gave a passing notice in connection with the events of the *landit* fair, and who was no other than the mother of the duchess of the Bohemians, gave the same signs

of idiocy as before. She appeared always insensible to what was passing around her.

When the tribe was in motion, they placed Marah—as she was called—at the bottom of a wagon, and she followed the band. Left in charge of Jenny and Méryem, she showed neither pleasure nor discontent; she seemed to feel nothing. Judith neglected her, but she never complained; affronts and acts of kindness she accepted with the same impassibility.

Now, the chief's wife was not always to be envied. God, in His justice, which He sometimes manifests in this world, permitted that the ill she did to others should be paid back to herself. Notwithstanding the influence she exercised over Lénor, the latter treated her cruelly at times.

The day following the arrival of the tribe at St. Germined, Judith, by her harshness and her pride, urged the chief too far; in the paroxysm of his fury, the Bohemian brutally struck his wife, and threw her half dead on the ground.

Old Marah was alone in the room. Although apparently insensible, she noticed what was going on, for she dragged herself towards her daughter, shook her, recalled her to herself, and helped her to lie down on some thick furs that were spread on a pallet.

Fortunately Jenny and Méryem soon made their appearance. With admirable zeal they bestowed on Judith the most affectionate care. Seeing that she was in a high fever, they prepared a potion which soothed her considerably.

The chief did not present himself in the sick room either that evening or the following night, during which time the sisters watched and tended Judith with filial tenderness. Next day, the fever, far from abating, became still more violent.

There was in the tribe an old Bohemian who was well acquainted with the virtues of herbs, and had some little knowledge of surgery. Although he mixed up certain superstitious practices with his art, he had really some skill, founded on experience and observation. He stood in high repute amongst his companions, who could have little recourse to the doctors of the towns. Jenny and Méryem, frightened at their mother's illness, sent Daniel to seek him.

The old Bohemian, being come to the chief's abode, examined Judith attentively. As he looked anxious, one of the girls said :

"What think you of our mother?"

"The case appears to me very serious," he replied.

"Can there be any danger?"

"The nature of the disease does not permit of its being treated as it should."

"What mean you?" asked Daniel.

"Agitation and the violence of the blows have so disturbed the brain, that I see no means of quieting your mother."

This announcement terrified the brother and the two sisters, and the young man said :

"Is it possible, then, that our mother's state is so desperate that there is no remedy to be had?"

"Do you wish to know the whole truth?"

"Certainly."

"Well!" said the Bohemian in a low voice, but so that Jenny and Méryem could hear, "I must not deceive you with hope; the situation is very alarming. There is, it is true, a means of cure, but it is not in my hands; I cannot procure it in this country."

"Tell me where it is to be found; I will take horse, and go for it immediately."

"Though your horse had wings, you would not get back in time."

The three young people understood that the Bohemian had just pronounced their mother's death warrant. Little as they owed to her, for she treated them as a cruel stepmother, still they heard with sincere sorrow the discouraging words of the doctor. They hung their heads in silence, and the tears came into their eyes.

Touched by this mute sorrow which bespoke the goodness of heart of Daniel and his sisters, the old man turned to them, and added:

"There may still be a gleam of hope. I will leave you an order, which you are to execute to the letter. I do not answer for its success; however, if the remedies be given just as I say, I would not be surprised if your mother recovered."

A ray of joy shone in the eyes of the brother and sisters. The Bohemian prescribed several medicaments, and again insisted on the utmost care being given to Judith; he then retired.

It needed not the old man's earnest recommendation. Jenny and Méryem posted themselves at the bedside of their supposed mother, and scarce left her for a moment. Nothing could equal their anxious solicitude, their delicate attentions, their eagerness to procure for the patient what relief they could ; they complied with her slightest wishes, and, if possible, anticipated them.

After the doctor's departure Judith wished to know his opinion ; she demanded the truth in such an imperious tone that they were obliged to tell her. She received the terrible sentence without any apparent emotion. Nevertheless she appeared touched by the devotion of her daughters and the tenderness they showed for her who so ill deserved it, at that hour when they had nothing more to hope or fear from her. She followed them with her eyes, and the hatred she had so often shown for them seemed to melt away in the fire of such charity. But she spoke not a word which denoted this change of feeling.

On the morning of the following day Lénor Eschol made his appearance in the room where his wife lay in a burning fever. The chief's anger had died away, and a vague uneasiness might be read in his face. He folded his arms as he stood beside the bed of pain, and gazed a moment, silent and motionless, on the livid features, the glistening eyes of Judith. He looked steadily at her two youthful nurses. Then throwing himself abruptly on a seat, he said to the sisters :

"Children, go and take some rest, I will take care of your mother in your absence."

Jenny and Méryem, amazed at this sudden fit of compassion in a man usually so unfeeling, looked at each other, not knowing what to answer. At last, as he seemed to wait till one of them spoke, Jenny replied :

"We are not fatigued, father!"

"You are, I see it," replied Eschol.

"Even so, permit us to remain with our mother."

"It is my wish that you should go away for a few moments."

And as the girls hesitated, he added : "It must be so ; do as I say."

"And I tell you to remain," said Judith, rising on her elbow.

"You can come back soon," pursued Lénor, paying no attention to what his wife said.

"We will not leave our mother," said both sisters together. "She is suffering, she wants us here, it is our duty to remain."

"You resist me still?" cried the chief beside himself with anger, and darting on his daughters, he seized each roughly by the arm.

But a hand suddenly restrained him ; he turned and perceived Daniel.

"Father," said the young man in his clear, emphatic tones, "let my sisters stay here, since my mother desires it. She has need of their kind attentions. It is not at a time like this that violence should be used."

"Accursed be thou!" muttered Lénor, who let go his hold, and rushed furiously from the room.

Judith thanked her children with a look ; she was too much affected to do it with her voice.

It was not affection that had brought the chief to his wife, suffering victim as she was of his brutality ; he feared lest the Bohemian, yielding to the influence of her kind nurses, and overcome by their devotion, should allow herself to be won over to their belief.

Once returned to the room he usually occupied, Eschol sent for Toby Spiller, who presented himself with his usual fawning and hypocritical look. The two Bohemians had a long conversation together.



VIII.

THE CONSOLING ANGEL.

AFTER the departure of Lénor, Daniel remained some time with his sisters at his mother's bedside, contemplating with sorrow the progress of the disease. At length he withdrew to apply himself to his needful occupations, for he held an important place in the government of the tribe. Then the two young girls, certain that their cares were agreeable to Judith, redoubled their zeal and multiplied the proofs of their affection.

It was not alone for the relief of the body that they thought, the care of the Bohemian's soul occupied them still more. Now and then, when the patient appeared to be asleep, they threw themselves on their knees to ask God to enlighten their mother; and Judith surprised them several times in that posture. They knew perfectly well that a miracle was necessary to make the light of grace penetrate into the mind of the duchess and transform her heart; but that miracle they implored with simple confidence, not doubting that the Lord would grant their petition.

However, there was a gulf between the convictions of the sick woman and those of her daughters. The religion of the Bohemians consisted in a rude mixture of Pagan, Jewish and Mahometan superstitions, borrowed from the countries they had traversed. At

bottom their worship was all negative, and if driven to its consequences, ended in atheism.

In Christian countries, like France, for instance, the adventurers, in order to not betray themselves, made a show of practising Catholicity. But the hypocritical acts which public opinion imposed upon them, rendered the Christian faith still more odious to them.

The hatred of Judith for the dogmas of the Church was even increased by the conversion of Jenny and Méryem. The obstacles to her change were great and humanly insurmountable.

Jenny, seeing the fever increasing instead of diminishing, and fearing the delirium which is the precursor of death, resolved to broach the subject of religion boldly to her mother. After having fervently asked assistance from above, she approached the sick woman. "Dear mother," said she in her sweetest accents, "you are very ill."

"I know it," answered Judith, in a voice less harsh than usual.

"My sister and I would wish to cure you. What joy it would give us if God restored you to health!"

"If there is a God, he abandons me," faltered the sick woman with a troubled look.

"He inhabits the heavens," said Jenny with an inspired air; "from the height of His celestial throne, He watches over all His creatures."

"I would fain believe it. But I feel my life ebbing fast away."

"Have good courage!"

"I do not deceive myself; I have been cruelly abused, and I am going to die."

"Perchance there may still be hope."

"No, all will soon be over with me in this world."

"After that, there is another, where, if you will, we may be united again."

"Child, your conduct, your virtues and those of your sister, lead me to put faith in your words. But you are two angels, and I am a devil."

"Oh! say not so!"

"I speak the truth."

"Hear rather the holy voice of our religion; it proclaims that heaven is made for all the children of men. The confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ, repentance for the faults committed, invested with conditions determined by the Man-God, suffice to open the entrance thereto."

Judith sighed.

"Mother," resumed the young girl, "will you refuse us the consolation of seeing you pray and hope with us?"

"What do you desire?" murmured the sick woman.

"That you embrace our faith."

"Would that make you both happy?"

"Yes, happy beyond expression."

"What is necessary to be done?"

"To receive the instructions of a Christian priest, and accomplish what he prescribes."

"I consent," said Judith, and her face, assuming a

brighter expression, suddenly lost its wonted bitterness.

She resumed after a pause :

"How can you bring a minister of Christ into this camp?"

"Who will prevent us?" answered Jenny.

"Lénor will not allow it."

"He cannot refuse."

"Do you not know him, then?"

"We know that our father is the sworn foe of the Christian religion; but as he and his companions are obliged to feign, at least, respect for the religion of this country, they dare not refuse a priest admission here."

"The chief will not shrink from that measure. You have just seen what a watch he keeps over me."

"Leave it to us, mother! We will accomplish it."

"Alas! I dare not."

"God will assist us."

"I do not understand," said Judith, "by what means you can apprise a minister of Christ."

"Yet there is a very easy way of doing it."

"Will you, then, go yourself?"

"That would be difficult; but we will find a faithful messenger."

"Who would you employ on such a delicate mission?"

"Daniel."

The sick woman was silent and seemed to reflect.

After a little while she raised her eyes to her daughters.

"Daniel is not a Christian," said she; "he holds a considerable position in the tribe; would he go on such an errand?"

"He would, I am sure he would," exclaimed Jenny. "For us, for you, there is nothing our brother would not do."

"Go, then, child, and be blessed for your admirable devotion."

The girl left the sick room immediately, and darted off in search of Daniel. She soon met the Bohemian.

"Brother," said she, "I would speak with you."

And she drew him aside. Daniel, surprised and alarmed, asked in a trembling voice: "Is our mother worse?"

"No, she is still in the same condition."

"What is the matter, then?"

"Our mother wishes to charge you with an important mission, requiring the most profound secrecy."

"She may count on me."

"You are not unaware that her illness will most probably prove fatal?"

"To my great grief I know it. But we must submit to the decrees of fate."

"The duchess of the Bohemians has, perchance, not long to live."

"We are threatened with a sad separation; and what crowns my affliction is the way in which our mother has been brought to the gates of death."

"Daniel, let us throw a veil over our father's faults ; let us think of nothing now but of her who is about to die. Before leaving this world she would be glad to see a Christian priest."

"A Christian priest !" cried Daniel ; " did I hear you aright ?"

"I have said the truth."

"And it is our mother who sends you ?"

"Even so."

"Daniel knit his brow and let his head fall on his breast with a troubled, anxious look."

"Brother," said Jenny, " will you refuse to execute our mother's pious will ?"

"I said not that."

"But you hesitate."

"Not so : I am reflecting on the numerous difficulties I may meet."

"If it were not that I dreaded considerable obstacles I would myself have brought the priest. But I am a weak woman, whereas you are a man. For our mother's sake you will, if necessary, struggle against our father."

"Jenny, I will, and I am proud of the confidence you have in me. I am going to set out, and I will bring our mother a priest."

The girl pressed her brother's hand.

"Is it to St. Germined I am to go ?" he asked.

"I would rather you should go farther."

"Where would you have me apply ?"

"At Seilhac, three leagues from here."

"Why there rather than at St. Germined?"

"Because you will find at Seilhac a holy monk whose words will do our mother more good than those of any one else."

"You know him, then?"

"Perfectly," answered Jenny, blushing; "I have several times had occasion to see him; I love and esteem him because of his eminent virtues. When you have spoken to him you will feel as I do towards the servant of God."

"When must I bring him?"

"As soon as possible."

"Our father will just be absent in the forepart of the night; I will take that opportunity to go to Seilhac."

"Adieu till night, then!—I will await you at the bedside of our dear patient." The brother and sister parted.

Although Daniel had remained attached to the superstitions of his tribe, he willingly set out to do the bidding of his mother and sisters. The maestral* was blowing with violence since the evening, uprooting the olives in the plain and ravaging the hills. The Bohemian, regardless of the inclemency of the weather, glided stealthily from the camp, taking care not to be observed. As soon as he had gained the valley, and thought himself certain of being out of the reach of prying eyes, he darted off on the road to Seilhac.

* The North-West wind in the Mediterranean.

Daniel was a good runner; notwithstanding the wind he reached his destination a little before night-fall. Having seen the priest immediately he retraced with him the way to the Bohemian encampment.

The religious to whom the young man had applied was called Father Hermanfred. The friend of Father Grambert, and belonging to the same Order, he replaced him in the South. The venerable friar we have met several times at the house of Master Etienne Belval had set out to fulfil his holy mission. But the poor and the wretched, whose support and comfort he was in Paris, had so earnestly protested against his absence, that Father Grambert's superiors had recalled him before he reached the province he was to evangelize. In his place they had sent Father Hermanfred.

The good religious, learning that there was question of saving a soul, immediately followed his guide, who succeeded in introducing him to the camp of the Bohemians about two hours after nightfall.

Before he took the father into the dwelling of the chief, Daniel said to him :

“Be not surprised, minister of God, at what you may observe amongst us.”

“Make your mind easy on that head, my son,” answered the monk, who knew the Bohemians by reputation.

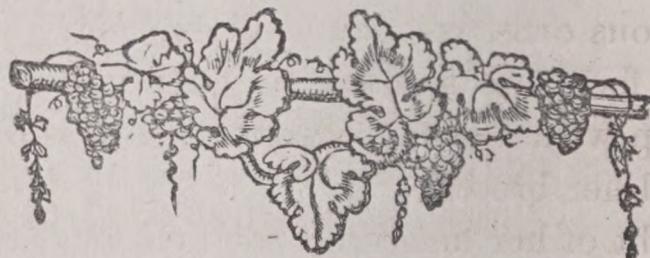
“If it please you, ask me no questions on the sub-

ject, as it would be impossible for me to satisfy you."

"I will be discreet, and do as you say."

The friar having entered the dwelling of Léonor Eschol, was received by Jenny and Méryem, who conducted him to the sick woman's bed, and left him alone with her. The man of God remained long with Judith. Going out he said to the two sisters : " Go now to your mother; she is in peace with the Lord."

The girls returned to the sick room, whilst Daniel accompanied the monk back to Seilhac.



IX.

THE CONFESSION.

ENTERING their mother's chamber, Jenny and Méryem perceived in a corner old Marah, whom they had forgotten to take out on the entrance of Father Hermanfred. Their grandmother counted for so little in the family, she appeared so insensible to all that was passing around her, that neither the sick woman nor the girls had thought of removing her to another apartment. Besides, Marah was fast asleep.

The two sisters, approaching Judith's bed, were struck by the joy and gladness visible on the Bohemian's face; a sweet smile parted her lips, an expression of heavenly bliss shone in her eyes. Judith was transfigured.

The deadly fire that smouldered in the depths of her lustrous orbs was now extinguished; the lines of her pale face, late so hard, so gloomy, were softened and lit up with a calm reflection: serene resignation illumined her brow.

At sight of her daughters she held out her hand to them, they raised it piously to their lips, and she said to them with inexpressible emotion:

"Children, I thank you; you have procured me more than life, in restoring me to joy, and happiness, and hope."

"It is to God that your gratitude is due; He alone

has done all; we have been but His humble instruments."

"Ah!" resumed the sick woman, "but the priest's visit has done me good! In the midst of my sufferings, on the threshold of eternity, I enjoy consolations before unknown!"

"Our felicity equals yours," answered Jenny in a voice of deep emotion.

"I shall owe to you the salvation of my soul, angels whom the Lord has sent me! Come, both, till I embrace you!"

The two sisters eagerly obeyed, and Judith held them long in a close embrace, shedding tears of joy.

Daniel appeared during this touching scene. At sight of the young man the Bohemian let go her daughters, and fixing on the young man a look full of sadness: "Daniel," said she, "come near me."

Surprised by her solemn tone, he approached his mother's bed.

"Daniel," said the sick woman, seizing her son's hand, "I am soon going to leave you."

"Leave me, O my mother! the hope of still preserving you!"

"God calls me to Himself, Daniel, and we must part. Would you that it be forever?"

"Ah! what a thing to say! Do you not know how much I love you?"

"Well! my last hour is close at hand. Will you allow me to appear before the Supreme Judge with the responsibility of the bringing up I gave you!"

Your sisters, better than I, have already renounced error and embraced truth ; will you refuse to imitate them ?”

“ My greatest wish is to please you.”

“ Then grant my last request.”

“ What do you require of me ?”

“ That you acknowledge the law of the Christians.”

“ Do you command me to do so ?”

“ Is it too much to ask of you ?”

“ No ; I am willing to obey you. For some time past I have been thinking of ranging myself under the banner of Christ. Your entreaties, your example, and that of my sisters, make me decide on doing so.”

“ Be blessed, my son, a thousand times blessed,” cried the happy mother, drawing the young man to her bosom ; “ now I shall die in peace, for I shall leave this world in the firm hope of seeing you all again in a better life.”

Daniel answered only by his tears and sobs. Judith added : “ After God, your sisters are the cause of our conversion. Were it not for their generous, heroic conduct we should, perchance, have remained to the end in the darkness of idolatry.”

The young man turned to Jenny and Méryem with a look of unutterable affection, and from the depth of his heart these words came forth :

“ Thanks, O my beloved !”

“ Now,” resumed the mother, “ now that we are all united in the same faith and the same hopes, come

nearer to me, dear children ! I have important things to reveal to you."

Daniel, Jenny, and Méryem sat down on the pallet whereon Judith lay.

"I wish," she began, "to lay my whole life before you; you will draw useful lessons from it. Listen, then!"

The three young people, lending their whole attention to the words of the Bohemian, were regarding her in respectful silence, when a creaking noise was heard in the partition behind Judith's bed.

"What is that?" cried the young man starting. The noise was not heard again.

"It is a false alarm," said the sick woman; "it is the maestral shaking the boards of the partition."

Daniel made no answer, but with his ear to the wall, continued to listen. Nothing stirred. No sound was heard but the howling wind without. The young man, reassured, seated himself beside his sisters, and Judith commenced as follows the story of her life:

"I was born in the neighborhood of Constantinople. My mother was called Marah; she is the aged woman who resides with us; her family name I will keep to myself. Our house was one of the oldest and most powerful of the Latin baronage; French by origin, it had established itself in the East at the time of the Crusades, in the conquest of the Greek Empire. It settled in that fine region and partly retained its religion and customs.

"The last and only scion of that noble race, I had the misfortune to lose my father in my early childhood. My mother, who was a Byzantine, was soon married a second time to a Greek. Light, frivolous, the sport of every passion, she neglected my childhood, and left me to the care of masters of her own country who brought me up in a deplorable manner.

"Astute and possessed of all their nation's impudence, they began by stifling in my soul the seeds of Catholicity sown there by my father, and initiated me in the schismatic doctrines of Byzantium. Instead of instructing me in the practice of Christian virtue, they inoculated me with the poison of Greek corruption.

"In justice I must add, however, that my inclinations tended but too much towards the inordinate pleasures of the world. Young, fair, rich, I could not fail to fall into the abyss.

"Becoming, when of age, absolute mistress of my own actions, I plunged into the whirlpool of forbidden joys, counting neither my own resources nor anything else. After a year of this disorderly life, I perceived with terror that my senseless dissipation, and more so that of my mother, had reduced the paternal inheritance to nothing. That blow, which was at the same time a warning and a lesson from Heaven, and which ought to have opened my eyes, had no effect on me. Void of all religious feeling, aspiring only to the enjoyments of this earth, I thought only of warding off the sad fate which I considered my misfortune.

I therefore resolved to continue my mad career at any cost. I succeeded but too well in my fatal projects.

"There was then in Byzantium a young man of unknown origin, of elegant manners, whose manly beauty charmed my eyes. I saw him, and, doubtless, pleased him, for he laid at my feet his supposed riches. In fact, he lived in grand style, and his fabulous wealth was everywhere spoken of.

"I listened to his seductive proposals, and I married him, without reflection, without making any inquiries. That man was Lénor Eschol.

"For some weeks we kept high festival, and the intoxication of pleasure transported me. We dissipated to our hearts' content, and sowed gold beneath our steps, to reap new joys. My mother, reduced to misery by the death of her late husband, had come to join us.

"Lénor's wealth was less than he had told me, or than I had imagined; in two months it was all gone. One day he told me with a bitter smile which I shall never forgot :

"'My fair Judith, I am more than ever enraptured with your charms; but I regret to tell you that fortune condemns us to retirement.'

"'What means this language?' I cried in terror.

"'Be calm,' replied he. 'It means that the drama is ended, and the curtain must fall.'

"'In pity, explain yourself; I do not understand these enigmas.'

“‘It is very simple, nevertheless ; we have squandered in a few weeks all I possessed.’

“‘Is it possible?’ I faltered, my heart torn with anguish.

“‘It is *true*. Yesterday we were thought immensely rich ; to-day we have nothing, not even the roof that covers us.’

“At this terrible news I fell into frightful spasms, whence I only recovered to give vent to imprecations against Lénor. I reproached him with having deceived me, and having basely abused my confidence.

“‘I will not stop to refute such charges,’ said he. I admit all these accusations, and I accept them. At this moment I will use candor and lay all my projects ‘before you.’

“‘What do you mean to do?’

“‘To quit Constantinople.’

“‘Whither will you go?’

“‘To rejoin a troop in which I hold a considerable rank, and it is on this point I wish you to decide.’

“‘Have you, then, the right to give me orders?’ I exclaimed, revolted by the coolness with which Lénor expressed himself.

“‘I claim no such right,’ he replied with a cruel smile ; ‘if you had let me finish you needed not to have asked me such a question.’

“‘I hear you,’ murmured I.

“‘Well! I give you your choice to remain here or go with me.’

“‘I will go with you.’

"He was, after all, my husband, and I still had some remains of affection for him. Besides, to expose myself to all chances, to command wretches, to live with brigands, was not so bad for me as to descend to a low rank in Constantinople, and to vegetate there a prey to misery, to all manner of humiliations. I left the city then with Lénor and my mother.

"After having traversed a portion of Syria, we arrived at the den of a band of vagabonds who lived either by robbery or imposing on public credulity.

"Eschol belonged to this tribe, and the adventurers hailed him as their duke or second chief, for they had another who bore the pompous name of king. Welcomed with honor by my husband's new subjects, I resigned myself to my strange destiny. However frightful this new life appeared to me, it seemed better than the shame of remaining, in my country, the laughing-stock of my former rivals.

"My old mother did not bear this change of condition as stoically as I did. Refusing to stoop to the infamous practices of those vagabonds, she received the worst of treatment from them; her reason gave way little by little, and she fell into the state wherein you now see her.

"When we had sojourned some time in Lower Egypt, we went back to Europe. Formed to all the manners and customs, and to all the requirements of the profession of my companions, I at length practised with a certain pride the art of divination. I identified myself with the tribe, and interested my-

self in its success. We visited several provinces of France and Germany. The principal chief having died during these wanderings, my husband succeeded him in the command.

"At this period we penetrated into France with the merchants who went periodically to the *landit* fair. That journey pleased me much, for I earnestly desired to know the country of my forefathers."

At this moment the sick woman, exhausted by the exertion this long story had caused her to make, stopped, out of breath, and sank back almost fainting on her bed. The two girls hastened to apply such restoratives as they had ; she revived, and was preparing to take up the broken thread of her narrative, when the noise heard a little before was heard still louder.

"I am not mistaken," cried Daniel, bounding off like a deer; "we are spied."

And the young man darted out of the room. Throwing a glance into an adjoining passage he saw a shadow detach itself from the wall, and glide, as it were, into the darkness. Daniel recognized a human form, and would have followed its steps. But the shadow vanished without leaving any trace of its passage. He searched all about his mother's chamber without succeeding in discovering anything.

Having returned to his sisters he found them supporting the inanimate form of Judith in their arms.

X.

THE MARCH.

DANIEL had guessed right; a man was watching what took place in the sick room. Toby Spiller, Léonor's spy, was plying his infamous trade.

By his master's order, the wretch kept within hearing from the beginning of the night. Placed against the wooden partition at the back of Judith's bed, he saw through a crevice what was going on in the Bohemian's chamber, and heard distinctly all that was said.

Toby had seen the entrance of Father Hermanfred; an invisible witness, he had lost neither a word nor gesture. He had also overheard the sick woman's conversation with her children.

At length, wishing to change his position, he involuntarily made the noise which had brought Daniel out of the room. But knowing the place so well, the spy easily eluded his search.

He hastened in quest of his master, Léonor Eschol. The chief of the Bohemians awaited him at the end of the encampment. Stretched under a poor shed erected on the slope of a hill, and completely deserted, he did not at first see his minion. When he heard Spiller's stealthy step a smile of satisfaction curled his lip.

Toby, on going in, carefully closed the door formed of disjointed boards, and Léonor, half rising, said : " So you have come back at last."

" Yes, master!"

" What have you learned?"

" I have made important discoveries."

" Conceal nothing from me."

" Your wife has followed the fatal example of Jenny and Méryem!"

" What do you tell me?" cried Léonor, his voice hoarse with anger.

" What I have seen."

" What! the proud Duchess of the Bohemians, whose pride or whose will I have never been able to subdue, she to have been influenced by two young girls! it is impossible; you must have misunderstood what you saw and heard."

" Pardon me, lord! I have as good hearing as any one in the tribe, and I am not mistaken."

" What has happened?"

" Judith has yielded to the entreaties of those whom she calls her daughters."

" Speak plainer."

" She has abjured our traditions, our customs, our practices, to adopt the abhorred religion of Christ."

" I had some vague presentiment of that misfortune. Nevertheless, I could not imagine that it would be realized almost under my eyes."

" Yet it is really so, and the act of treason is consummated."

"I believe you," said Lénor. "Did you see anything else?"

"Yes, Judith did not confine herself to professing the Christian religion."

"What further did she?"

"She received a monk into your dwelling?"

"Curses light on her!" howled the chief, clenching his fists with rage: "a monk under my roof! what insolence and what audacity!"

"I have not told all," said the spy with a savage smile.

"What more, then, have you to tell me?"

"I pity you, master!"

"Speak, and do not keep me in suspense," said Lénor impatiently.

"I refer to your son."

"Where is he?"

"In his mother's chamber."

"What does he there?"

"He is in company with his sisters," evasively replied Spiller, whose object was to unroll successively before the chief's eyes the different scenes he had witnessed. "The harm is not there. But I fear that the young man may allow himself to be perverted in his turn."

"Would he be on the point of becoming a Christian?" inquired the chief in a husky voice.

"That I know not. But I remarked alarming signs. It was Daniel that brought the monk to your lodgings, and it was also he that conducted him out

of the encampment. Besides, he promised his mother to embrace the law of Christ."

"Woe, woe to him!" cried Lénor in fearful accents.

"All is not yet lost," observed Spiller; "your son has as yet abjured nothing, or pronounced the act of adhesion to Christianity."

Toby did not dare openly to accuse the son of the chief; he was not unaware that the young man enjoyed a great influence over the Bohemians, and that he cared little for the paternal authority. For the same reasons Eschol repressed his anger.

"I hope," he contented himself with answering, "that Daniel, docile to my voice and the dictates of reason, will return from these senseless notions."

"May you succeed in persuading him!"

"In any case, I will deprive him of the opportunities he has of being perverted."

"If you cut off the evil at the root," said Toby, "you will act wisely."

"I will do so."

So saying, Lénor dismissed Spiller with a gesture, but the spy added: "I have not finished."

"What remains?"

"Something you will not like to hear, and something, too, that concerns you more than anything I have told you."

"Fate pursues me, I see. But explain yourself; I am anxious to hear all."

"Judith has been making disclosures."

"To whom?"

"To your children," answered the spy, who seemed to take pleasure in revealing to his master with desperate slowness the discoveries he had made: it was a poison he distilled, as it were, drop by drop.

"What did Judith tell them?" said Lénor, clutching the spy by the arm.

"She raised the veil which covered your past and her own. Now Daniel, Jenny and Méryem are aware of the events which marked your life and that of their mother."

"So, she made Jenny and Méryem acquainted with the secret of their birth?"

"I suppose so."

"How! did you not hear all?"

"Yes, as far as your first journey into France. Judith was there, when a slight noise I made called Daniel's attention, and I was obliged to retire. But you may rest assured that your wife finished her story."

"You have told me things of the very highest importance."

"So I think."

"The conversion of Judith," pursued Eschol, "the confession she has made, the uncertainty with regard to Daniel, may cause great trouble to the tribe."

"You are needlessly alarmed, I think."

"Not so. I measure facts coolly, and I maintain that what has just passed places us all in danger."

"What can Daniel and the two girls do against the whole tribe?"

“They might one day give us up to justice. Treachery will cost them nothing; they would even make a merit of it, for the Christians regard us as abominable reprobates.”

“You must own, master, that we have not stolen our reputation.”

“Even so; it is no less true that our situation is most critical. We must put Jenny and Méryem out of sight.”

“It will be no easy matter.”

“The one that troubles me most is Daniel.”

“What do you fear from him?”

“That he may upset my plans. Devoted to his mother and the girls whom he believes his sisters, he will do everything to protect them, if we try to take them away. However, if we would save ourselves from misfortune, they must be sent far away, or even perish; if not, we are lost.”

Whilst Lénor spoke, Toby was examining the dim horizon; he was trying to pierce the darkness of the night in the direction of the sea, whose distant roar was heard, and at times the white crest of its waves was seen.

“What do you perceive?” asked the chief.

“I am looking—” muttered the spy.

“For what?”

“The means of getting you out of trouble.”

“In sooth, I would fain know what it is that fixes your attention at this moment.”

"I can easily tell you that; I am watching the troubled surface of the sea."

"You must have wonderfully good sight," said Léonor in a slightly ironical tone, "if you can distinguish anything through such darkness as this. As for me, I would lie if I said I descried the smallest object a few perches off."

"Look to the right, master!"

"I discern nothing."

"See, then, yonder," said the spy extending his arm, "is there not a black speck rising and falling on the foaming billow?"

"So there is. But what has the black speck to do with the subject in hand?"

"Can you not guess?"

"No, by hell!"

"Well! I am going to tell you: that black speck is a vessel."

"What is that to me?"

"Excuse me; that vessel belongs neither to the king nor the coast service. By this time and at this hour, the government ships are lying at anchor in the safest harbors."

"What vessel is that, then?"

"A Barbary corsair; such, at least, is my humble opinion."

"I do not understand how that can interest me. Whether a pirate or a royal vessel rides the sea at this moment, is all the same to me."

"I have known you quicker at catching a good idea," said the spy.

"Will you speak plainly?" cried Lénor, irritated by these hints.

There was a short silence, then Toby added: "Now, master, in consequence of your wife's revelations, you are at the mercy of Jenny and Meryém, I am surprised, then, that you do not think of what immense service an African pirate may be to you. These sea rovers possess, in the first place, a numerous crew, and they ask no better than to exchange their gold for beautiful maidens."

"Truly, Toby, you have started an excellent idea; I will reflect on it, for it is worth the trouble."

"There is no time for reflection," replied Spiller; "you must decide immediately, for to-morrow the vessel will be gone."

"You are right," replied Lénor, "it would be madness to lose such an opportunity, which will not only free us from all fear, but will procure us a considerable sum."

"Yet, master," resumed the spy, "in saying that this craft is a Barbary corsair, I only pretend to make a supposition; it may be, in sooth, that I am mistaken."

"It would be requisite, then, to enter into communication with the vessel."

"It is easier to give the advice than to put it in execution."

"The only means, it seems to me, of knowing the truth, is to repair on board the ship."

"Who will undertake such a mission?"

"Would you be unwilling to do it?"

"The step is perilous," said Toby. "Nevertheless, I will risk the undertaking, if you will secure to me a share of the profit you will make by it."

"That I will do most willingly."

"How much will you give me?"

"Fix the sum yourself."

"Well! I will be content with the half."

"You surely jest?"

"Not the least in the world."

"The half! did I hear you aright?"

"Yes; it is not too much, in regard to the risk I am to run."

"I cannot accede to such conditions."

"And I will do nothing unless you do. The reward would be still below the danger."

"What do you dread, then?"

"First, the sea is extremely rough, and it is not prudent to attempt boarding a vessel, for the first time, in such weather. Then, I have got to pass under the ramparts of St. Germined's tower, where constant watch is kept."

"You are mistaken on that point. Yesterday I advanced, by chance, to the foot of the tower, and convinced myself that it is very ill guarded. As it is a long time since pirates have been seen on these

shores, there is only in the tower some two or three men, who are certainly fast asleep at this hour."

"Be that as it may," said Spiller, "I will not go to that vessel if you grant me not what I ask."

"Go, then, for half the profit."

"Before I set out," added the spy, "it behooves us to understand each other, for fear of mistake. If I succeed in boarding the vessel, and arranging matters with the captain, I will hoist a light, and you will come to me at once; in the contrary case I shall have failed."

Lénor having promised to comply punctually with these directions, Toby Spiller took his way immediately to the coast, and soon disappeared in the darkness of the night. The chief of the Bohemians remained motionless in the same place, his eyes fixed on the sea.

At the end of a quarter of an hour's expectation, a bright light shot upwards to the sky, shedding a lurid glare on the rigging of the ship and the sea around her.

"It is the signal; Toby has succeeded," said Lénor to himself in an under tone. And he darted out of his shelter. In a few moments he reached the shore. Fishing barks were moored in little creeks; he unfastened one, turned the prow towards the vessel, and boldly committed himself to the troubled sea. The wind, blowing violently off shore, brought him quickly to the corsair.

It was a strong Barbary carvel, displaying at its gaff the flag of Tunis.

Lénor Eschol seized the grapnel thrown him from the ship, made his craft fast to the vessel near that of Toby, and mounted the deck. He found it encumbered with every engine of war and of navigation, and furrowed with dark shades, the lips of which, opening, showed two rows of white sharp teeth. There were men everywhere, along the barricading, in the yards, in the tops. The night watch was set, and half the crew slept in the safety of the carvel.

The chief of the Bohemians shuddered to think that he was at the mercy of those dreaded pirates. He was speedily reassured by the sight of his spy, Toby Spiller, advancing in company with a Moor of tall stature, with whom he was chatting familiarly. The sea rover, stout and robust, with a bronzed complexion and strongly marked features, wore the loose garments in use in his nation, a rich Damascus scimitar, and all the insignia of command.

Toby, advancing towards his master, said : "I have the honor, master, to present to you the captain of this vessel, Abdi-Rhaman."

Lénor bowed.

" You come," asked the corsair, " to treat with me on business ?"

" Precisely."

" What is your business ?"

" Two young maidens of rare beauty, and both endowed with remarkable talents."

"Very good. What do you expect for them?"

"I think myself entitled to ask a good price for them."

"I am willing to give you a good price, but you know I cannot make a blind bargain."

"Would you have a particular description of the slaves in question?"

"That were of no avail. On this point I must judge for myself. Bring them on board, and then we shall consider the matter."

"That appears to me difficult."

"Wherefore?"

"Because, if we do not come to terms, I would be in an awkward position. Think, Signor Moor, what my situation would be with those girls if I were obliged to take them home again. Unhappily I dwell for the moment in a Christian country, and if the least hint got abroad regarding my intentions, I were a lost man."

"You are prudent," said the pirate with an equivocal smile.

"Prudence is the mother of safety," declares the old proverb, "and I think it should not be despised."

"What assurance have I that you do not deceive me?"

"I would be very silly if I did. Moreover, you are only to pay the sum agreed on in exchange for the merchandise."

"In that case, name your terms."

The chief of the Bohemians proceeded to name a sum, which was accepted after some debate.

"Was that all you had to communicate to me?" said the Moor.

"Wait a moment, I have not finished. I have a woman at home of fifty years or so, who is seriously ill."

"What would you have me do with her? Do you take my carvel for an hospital?"

"Allow me to finish, Signor Moor! This woman, if she recovers, as she probably will, is capable of doing good service to her master, for she is vigorous, and received a brilliant education."

"That is a very different bargain from the other, and it is for me to make the conditions."

"Oh! as for that woman, I will be nowise particular; I will not sell her to you."

"Then we shall be able to understand each other."

"You see nothing is more easy; you will have a slave the more, free of cost."

"Agreed."

"In return," said Lénor, "I will ask a favor of you."

"Ah! there are conditions?"

"They are easily fulfilled. I venture to say you will not refuse my request."

"If it be possible for me to grant it, I will."

"I have a son, a youth of eighteen, whom I value highly, and would not wish to lose; only I would be pleased to have him taken away for some time."

"How can I assist you?"

"I thought you might probably consent to receive him on board your vessel."

The pirate reflected for some moments; then he replied with a strange smile: "I would willingly do what you ask, but there is a difficulty in the way."

"What is that?"

"It is that I know not whether I shall return hither. I do not usually frequent these shores."

"But you will touch at some other European coast?"

"Assuredly; I will visit the ports of Italy before returning to Tunis."

"That will exactly serve my purpose. I count on leaving France soon myself with my troop, and I will steer my course towards the peninsula. Only consent to take my son on board, and land him on the shores of the Adriatic; I can easily find him there."

"I will do as you wish."

"Be not offended," added Eschol, "if I insist further. It is agreed that I give you my son. But I would wish to have a guarantee that he will be safe on board your vessel."

"Nothing more just. But I know not what pledge to offer you: you are a Christian, and I am a Mussulman."

"I am not a Christian," said Lénor vehemently; "I, probably, hate the law of Christ more than you do."

"Who are you, then?"

"A little your brother and co-religionist."

"How so?"

"I follow on land the trade you follow on sea. My men and I are generally known by the name of Bohemians and Egyptians, and we respect the name of Mahomet. Between the true believers and us the difference is slight."

"Here is what I will do," proposed the pirate: "in exchange for the youth, I will give you a sum equivalent to the price of his sale, with a writing stipulating that he shall be restored to you on its repayment."

"I prefer something else, for I hold to your landing him on a point of the Italian coast."

"Speak, then, what would you have?"

"An oath sworn on the Koran and by the sacred name of the Prophet."

"Agreed; so it shall be. Now, it remains for you to see how we are to fulfil our agreement. I have little time to remain here. If you are so minded, then, I will land to-morrow night with some men, and present myself at your encampment to receive the two maidens, the sick woman, and the young man. Of course I will pay you immediately the sum agreed on."

"I will expect you, for the sooner the affair is terminated, it is all the better for me. Till to-morrow night, Signor Moor, adieu!"

The pirate waved a salute to the chief of the Bohemians, who descended from the deck of the carvel with Toby Spiller. The two brigands unmoored their skiffs, and prepared to regain the shore. But

as the wind was ahead, the return was difficult and dangerous; the captain gave them some men to convey them to the shore.

The chief and his spy passed St. Germined's tower without hindrance, and returned to the encampment. They arrived there at the dawn of day. Then, casting a glance on the sea, they saw that the carvel was out of sight. The Barbary vessel had put out to sea notwithstanding the strong gale that was blowing.



XI.

DISAPPEARANCE.

ON approaching his habitation, Lénor Eschol was surprised to see no one around it, and to hear no noise within. He communicated his impressions to Toby, and said to him :

“ What can have happened ? ”

“ Let us go in, and we shall know,” answered the spy, as anxious as his master.

The two Bohemians, having pushed the door open, went in. After a rapid survey of the interior the chief uttered a cry of rage ; the several compartments were empty ; at least there remained only Marah, asleep in a corner of Judith’s room. The sick woman, Jenny, Méryem, even Daniel had disappeared.

“ What means all this ? ” asked Lénor in a husky voice.

“ The meaning is, I think, plain enough.”

“ I do not understand it.”

“ Facts speak for themselves, nevertheless,” said the spy, with vexation.

“ How do you understand it ? ”

“ The women and your son have escaped ; that is clear, it appears to me, for the nest is empty.”

“ I see it now. But what can be the motive of this disappearance ? ”

“ I guess what it is ; they are warned, they dread

you, your proceedings appeared to them suspicious.

"Yes, I understand; they dreaded my projects, and have betaken themselves where I cannot reach them."

"May we not have still greater misfortunes to dread?"

"What do you apprehend?"

"Something that would place us in a critical position."

"Explain yourself!"

"I much fear that the fugitives may be gone to denounce us."

"You are right; I know them now, and they will certainly do it, if they have not done it already. I ought to have been more on my guard."

There was a moment's silence between the two brigands. Then the chief of the Bohemians advancing towards old Marah, who continued to sleep, shook her roughly by the arm. The unfortunate woman, waking up, regarded Léonor with terrified eyes, and uttered a plaintive moan. Eschol tried to make her speak, and tormented her some time with multiplied questions; but he could draw nothing from her. Marah was probably incapable of giving any information, and the rascal was obliged to leave her in peace.

He returned to Toby Spiller, who stood looking on, silent and motionless, and said to him in a despairing tone:

"What had we best do?"

"I know not," murmured the spy.

"Have you no good advice to give me?"

"I am thinking the matter over."

"The dilemma is great, and we must not make a decision lightly. If we are unhappily denounced, we cannot conceal ourselves by flight from the danger that threatens us."

"Ha! ha!" cried Toby suddenly slapping his forehead, "I think I begin to understand it. Yes, I am sure I have it now."

The spy's face brightened up, the smile returned to his lip, and Lénor watched him in surprise, waiting till he should develope his thought.

"Here is my reasoning," pursued Spiller, "and you will, doubtless, judge, like me, that it is well founded: the fugitives have no project against us, otherwise they would not have left Marah behind. I will even go further, and add that Daniel and his sisters are only gone away for a little while."

"On what grounds do you make this supposition?"

"On what grounds?"

"Yes, I would fain know."

"If the fugitives had had the intention of leaving us forever, they would have taken away the old woman. They would never think of leaving her exposed to our vengeance."

"Your argument appears to me conclusive."

"There can, I think, be no doubt about it."

"But wherefore, then, this sudden disappearance?"

"Can you not guess?"

"In sooth, no!"

"In my opinion, they merely wanted to remove Judith to a place where she could more conveniently receive the assistance of her new religion, and where they could more easily tend her to their liking. Do you think I am mistaken?"

"I think, on the contrary, that your supposition is very probable. But it behooves us that the two girls return before to-night, for we must not break our word with the pirate."

"That is just the difficulty."

"All our plans will fall to the ground unless they come back to-night. What say you?"

"I am of your opinion."

"How are we to avoid this mishap?"

"Wait," said the spy, with a thoughtful air; he was fairly at his wit's end.

"There is little chance, I fear," said Lénor. "Nevertheless, let us try to obtain some information."

The two Bohemians, going out together, visited the neighboring huts, and inquired if any one knew what direction had been taken by the fugitives; they thus went all through the encampment without hearing anything of them.

Foiled in their attempt, and fearing to excite the attention of the strangers who began to crowd in, they returned to the chief's dwelling to consult anew. We shall avail ourselves of the opportunity thus afforded us to relate what passed during their visit to the Moorish carvel.

Neither Judith, Jenny, Méryem nor Daniel ever suspected the infamous projects of Lénor. They were unaware of the presence of the corsair on the adjoining coast, and had they known it, the idea would never have occurred to them that the chief thought of selling three females living under his own roof, one of them his lawful wife, and the others his reputed daughters.

Nevertheless, Daniel, certain that Judith's conversation with him and his sisters had been overheard by a spy, easily understood that the wretch had been sent by Lénor, and that the chief would speedily learn all.

Thenceforth he felt that he had everything to dread on the part of Eschol, and that the latter would revenge himself on the unhappy creatures shut up under his roof. He feared, moreover, that he might not be able to preserve himself from the effects of Lénor's wrath. He resolved, then, to act without loss of time, and to place his mother in safety during the Bohemian's absence.

Some days previously the young man had made a singular discovery in the neighborhood of St. Germined. At the bottom of a narrow valley, in a lonely place, covered over with brushwood and tufts of trees, he had observed considerable ruins, the crumbling walls of an old castle, the shattered remains of which lay scattered over a vast extent of ground.

No road led to these ruins, which were overgrown with tall grass, wild gilliflowers, and even some de-

generate pomegranate trees. No human trace was visible all around ; wild animals, bees, and osprays alone made their dwelling in that desolate place.

The adventurous spirit of Daniel was not dismayed by the forbidding aspect of these ruins ; he boldly penetrated into them, visited them in detail, and stopped before a large aperture choked up with thorns and briars. Having raised this prickly curtain, not without tearing his hands, he saw that the opening sank abruptly under ground, and he hesitated not to venture in.

He had only taken a few steps when he met a vault. He advanced into a narrow passage, solidly arched, which appeared to him to lead to an ancient gallery hollowed out beneath the castle. Having partially explored these catacombs and satisfied his curiosity, he retired, little doubting but he might soon turn his discovery to good account.

Daniel remembered this vault the night he wanted to take his mother away from Lénor's bad treatment ; he resolved to convey Judith and his sisters thither. Having carefully wrapped the sick woman in furs and coverlits, he took the precious burden on his shoulders, advised Jenny and Mériem to take provisions with them, and they set out for the ruins.

In the hurry of departure, Marah was completely forgotten. Daniel easily found the entrance to the arched gallery, which he widened at the mouth ; then he penetrated with his mother and sisters into that unknown retreat. After following the narrow pas-

sage for some time, he came to a large chamber in tolerably good preservation. The apartment, decorated with some paintings and paved in mosaic, must have served for a bath.

Judith was still in a swoon. Her son spread the furs and coverlets on the ground, and laid the sick woman upon them; the girls placed themselves beside the Bohemian, and used the utmost endeavors to restore her to consciousness.

The young man, having procured wood, lit a large fire to dispel the dampness of the vault. Two hours had passed before Eschol's wife recovered her senses.

"Where am I?" she asked on opening her eyes.

"Dear mother, be composed," answered Daniel; "you are safe."

And he told what he had considered it his duty to do in order to defeat the evil designs of the chief.

The sick woman showed herself fully sensible of these filial attentions.

"Thanks, child," said she; "I am sensible of your devotion; but it was useless to take so much trouble for me; I feel that I have but little time to live. Little matters it, then, where I breathe my last."

"Would you not be glad," asked Jenny, "to see the holy monk who has already visited you?"

"I desire nothing so much."

"Well! in this retreat you can converse with him at pleasure, without fear of odious eavesdroppers."

"I will hasten, then, to bring Father Hermanfred again," said Daniel.

"Let him come quickly."

"I will bring him here before night."

With these words the young man kissed his mother's burning brow, gave some brief instructions to his sisters, and darted off on the road to Seilhac.

Daniel was gone some moments when the sick woman threw an anxious glance around her.

"What has become of my mother?" she said in a tone of alarm.

The two girls started at this question, and remembered that they had forgotten old Marah.

"She has, doubtless, remained in the encampment," Jenny answered evasively.

"Alas!" sighed Judith, "shall I not see her before I die? I have a duty to perform in her regard."

Jenny and Méryem regarded her, uncertain what they ought to do. The Bohemian added: "I wish to ask her pardon for having brought her into the midst of a troop of bandits."

"You shall have that consolation, mother," said Méryem in a decided tone.

"Who will bring Marah hither?"

"I will go myself to seek her."

"You cannot go alone," exclaimed Jenny; "if our mother permits it I will accompany you."

"There is no danger. The chief cannot have returned, and no one will yet have perceived our absence."

"Jenny is right," said the sick woman; "it is not prudent that Méryem should go alone. Children, if

you would try to bring my mother to me, go together."

Conformably to Judith's wish the two girls made the necessary arrangements that she might not suffer too much from their absence, and immediately set out for the encampment of the tribe.



XII.

THE POTION.

JENNY and Méryem promised to return soon to their patient, and to avoid, if possible, meeting Lénor. Unhappily, their hopes were not to be realized.

On entering the rude dwelling they had left a few hours before, they perceived Lénor Eschol and Toby Spiller, who were waiting for them in a state of fearful exasperation.

At sight of the fugitives, a ray of ferocious joy darted from the eyes of the chief, and he pounced upon them like a tiger on his prey. He seized them by the arm, and made them cry out with pain. Pushing them to the farther end of the room, he growled out :

"I have you again, and you shall not escape me this time ; your doom is sealed."

Toby Spiller placed himself before the door, as if to shut out all retreat from the two unfortunates, thus carrying out his master's threats.

The two sisters answered only by a faint moan.

"You shall speak," roared Lénor again with increasing fury.

"What would you of us ?" murmured Jenny, trembling in the iron clutches of the monster.

"What have ye been doing this night ?"

"We are not obliged to give an account of our actions."

" You refuse to answer ? "

" What do you wish to know ? "

" I would know where you have conducted Judith, my wife."

" We have helped to place her beyond the reach of your bad treatment," said Jenny in a firmer tone.

" You have perverted her, and she has joined your accursed sect ! "

" She has opened her eyes to the light, and it is our ardent wish that you may one day follow her example."

" What ! you dare to talk so to me ? " cried the chief darting a ferocious look on the courageous girl.
" You do not know me, then ? "

" It is precisely because I know you too well that I wish to see you changed."

" Miserable creature, I believe you mean to insult me ! "

" I obey the inspirations of Christian charity, and not those of hatred or contempt. Christ forgave His executioners on the cross ; He prayed for them ; His disciples ought to imitate Him."

" I estimate at their full value these hypocritical protestations, and I am not mad enough to trust them. You shall learn to your cost that no one despises my authority with impunity. Your mother, too, shall soon have to account for her treachery. Not content with renouncing our traditions, she has revealed our secrets."

"Our mother has acted conscientiously; she had only in view to obey God."

"She made important disclosures, I know."

"We have no interest in denying it."

"What did she tell you?"

"She told us her life. Judith has, doubtless, been guilty; but in the eyes of the Lord, sincere repentance effaces a multitude of sins."

"If your God has forgiven her, I will not be so indulgent. I will punish her for having revealed the seerets of the past."

"She is no longer in your power."

"You shall conduct me immediately to the place whither you have conveyed her."

"Impossible."

"Are you not afraid to disobey me?" cried the chief with increasing fury.

"We discharge a duty in taking from you the means of disturbing the last moments of a dying woman."

"Know that I will employ force, if necessary, to compel you to reveal Judith's hiding-place."

"You are master of our bodies, but not of our wills."

Lénor Eschol half drew the poignard hidden in his belt; but he restrained himself, and pushed back the weapon into its leatheren sheath. He rapidly approached an iron-bound chest, put a key in the enormous lock, opened it, and took out a phial filled with liquid of a pale red. He went straight to the two girls, and

fixing on them a look of intense hatred, he said in a voice hoarse with anger :

" You see this potion ? it is a deadly poison which I keep for extreme cases. You shall tell me your secret, or perish."

Jenny and Méryem, their arms intertwined, pale but resolute, kept silence.

" Do you consent to inform me of Judith's retreat ?" asked Lénor.

" We refuse," answered the two girls simultaneously.

" Are you quite decided ?"

" We are."

" Is that your last word ?"

" We have nothing more to say."

" Then you must die," cried the bandit in a thundering voice.

" Sister," said Jenny, turning to her companion, " let us be courageous, and generously offer to God the sacrifice He demands of us. To give one's life for a motive of charity, is to win a bright crown in the heavens with the martyr's palm."

" We will do our duty, with the grace of the Lord," replied Méryem.

And the two sisters, throwing themselves into each other's arms, presented a sublime spectacle that would have softened men less depraved than those who contemplated them. They remained thus some time clasped in a mutual embrace, exhorting each other to be firm. Lénor Eschol interrupted them, saying :

" It is time to put an end to this."

"Let us pray a moment," entreated the two sisters.

"Be it so, but be quick about it."

They knelt down, and ardently implored the divine mercy for the wretch who was preparing to take their life. Soon they arose calm and composed, their faces bright with resolution.

"We are ready," they said.

"To obey me?" asked Lénor, astonished at this serenity, which he could not understand.

"To die," replied the young maidens.

No sooner had Jenny and Méryem uttered these words than the chief of the Bohemians, calling Toby to his assistance, approached the first of the two sisters, and poured, by force, down her throat one-half the contents of the phial he held. The unfortunate girl immediately fell to the ground motionless and apparently lifeless.

"'Tis your turn now," said Lénor, making Méryem swallow the rest of the portion. The girl fell in her turn beside her sister.

Old Marah, who was present at this terrible scene, was so frightened by the double fall that she uttered a piercing cry, and dragged herself into the farthest corner of the dwelling.

The chief, having finished his vile work, bent over the inanimate bodies of his victims; he examined their pulse; it beat no more; he passed a glass over their blanched lips, but no breath tarnished its surface, and he arose satisfied, without the least sign of emotion.

"The drink was active," said he to Toby; "so far all goes well."

Spiller expressed his satisfaction, and his master resumed: "Let us now carry these two bodies into the secret receptacle contained in the right wall of this chamber."

The two Bohemians, taking up the maidens, on whose brow hovered the shades of death, in silence directed their steps to the place indicated by Lénor. The chief drew back a panel, and discovered a space of some five feet square. There they laid the bodies of the maidens; then the secret place was carefully closed again.

"Now, what are we going to do?" demanded Toby in a low voice.

"You will remain here during my absence."

"It is well."

"You must not go away on any account whatever. You will watch attentively over this closet."

"If Daniel returns, and asks for his sisters, what am I to say?"

"You will try to keep him engaged till my return."

"And if he wants to look for Jenny and Méryem?"

"You will let him do so; he cannot discover the place where we have hid them."

"Your instructions, master, shall be faithfully followed. But I would like to ask you a question."

"Speak!"

"Whither are you going?"

"I am going to try to obtain some tidings of

Judith. I must find the woman before night comes in order to give her up to the corsair."

"Wherefore give yourself that trouble?"

"For fear she might denounce us. Not seeing the girls return, she will not fail to accuse us and try every means of taking them from us."

"But she is very ill."

"Undoubtedly. But it is always wise to take due precautions."

"You speak well, master," said the spy. "They will be cunning, indeed, who outwit you."

As soon as the chief was gone, Toby installed himself in the large room of the dwelling, and did not lose sight a moment of the closet where lay Eschol's victims. Nothing came to disturb him in his watch, except the wind without and the incoherent words muttered at times by old Marah.



XIII.

ON BOARD THE CARVEL.

LENOR ESCHOL did not appear again till after night-fall.

"Have you succeeded in your search?" the spy eagerly demanded.

"I have not discovered the slightest trace," answered the chief in a dejected tone, and throwing himself on a wooden bench.

"It is strange."

"I searched all the neighborhood in vain; I questioned every one I met, and I have not even heard that any one saw Judith."

"So she is not to be found?"

"I fear not. But what of Daniel; has he returned?"

"Yes."

"At what hour?"

"A little before midnight."

"Tell me what passed."

"He asked me about his sisters; but, seeing that he could draw nothing out of me, he went away."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"Excuse me; he came back here again a moment after. He wanted to take away old Marah, which I opposed. Then he abruptly retired, and I tried to follow him; but the attempt was not successful, for he wound his way so dexterously through the encampment that I immediately lost track of him."

"All this is very provoking."

"I obeyed your orders the best I could ; it was not my fault if Daniel escaped."

"I say not that it was."

"In sooth, it would be wrong to hold me responsible for your blunder."

"Did Daniel ask for me ?"

"No ; but I thought he seemed as though he would like to have seen you."

"I prefer not to have met him. He would, doubtless, have demanded explanations ; he might have availed himself, to intimidate me, of the influence he exercises over the tribe, and I might have found it hard to resist him."

"Yet you told me to try and keep him engaged till your return."

"That is true ; but I had a project in my head. Profiting by the return of night, I would have had some of our trusty fellows take him and carry him off. Did you remark anything else worth telling me ?"

"I have told you all."

"It suffices."

"What orders have you to give me ?"

"Listen ; the moment approaches when we are to give up the girls to the corsair."

"Yes ; the Moor is to come ashore at midnight."

"I have just thought of something."

"What is it ?"

"That we would all do well to go on board the pirate's carvel."

"Why that project, which appears to me a hazardous one?"

"Because I see little chance of extricating ourselves by any other means from the danger that threatens us on land."

"I do but half understand you."

"It is certain that we shall soon be denounced to the magistrates, if we are not already."

"I admit that."

"Perchance preparations are now being made to surround us, and then we cannot escape the hands of our enemies."

"It is true."

"If it be so, we have no other means of safety than to embark on the Barbary vessel, with our baggage and the fruits of our industry. In that way, by means of a moderate compensation, we shall save our persons and our goods. Besides, there is no use in denying it, a longer sojourn in France is impossible for us. Terrible decrees are out against us, and it is only in two or three districts like this that we are not exposed to be hunted like wild beasts."

"But," objected Toby Spiller, "do you not fear to trust these Moors?"

"Not at all."

"Yet they are robbers, sea rovers, the terror of all fishing craft, and even of ships of heavy burden."

"And we," replied the chief with a bitter laugh, "what are we but land rovers? Make your mind easy; the captain appears to me a man on whom on

an count ; we will pay him the price of our passage, and he will not forget that our origin and our religion are but little different. I would rather, at worst, fall into the hands of the pirates than those of French magistrates."

At last the spy yielded to Lénor's reasons. He declared that he fully approved of his plans, and urged him to put them promptly into execution.

Strengthened still more in his resolution by Toby's assent, to which he attached great importance, the chief of the Bohemians announced to Spiller that he was going to give the signal to the families composing the tribe to pack up in all haste. "After that," said he, "I will repair to the shore to await the corsair."

"What shall I do during your absence?" inquired Toby, who never acted without the express orders of his master.

"Continue your watch here, and at the same time commence your preparations for our departure."

"You shall be obeyed," answered the spy.

And he went to work immediately rolling up the canvas, the coverlits, the furs, and packing the other effects belonging to the duke of the Bohemians.

Lénor, having given the signal for preparation, and put all the camp in motion, took his way rapidly towards the shore. The sea was a little calmer, yet the wind still blew strongly. Eschol waited two hours on the beach for the pirate.

All at once he thought he could distinguish a black speck on the waves, increasing very fast, and ap-

proaching the shore. Soon a brilliant light shone out through one of the port-holes of the carvel, purpled the waves a moment, and vanished. Lénor, who had provided himself with a torch, lit it, waved it a moment in the air, then extinguished it under his feet.

This was the signal agreed upon.

Almost at the same moment several boat-loads of pirates reached the shore, in front of the Bohemian chief. The captain, Abdi-Rhaman, first leaped ashore, and advanced to Eschol whilst his people landed.

Lénor, astonished at the numerous troop brought by the corsair, conceived some anxiety. Still he took care not to show it.

"You are punctual to time," said the pirate accosting the Bohemian.

"I owe you the same compliment, lord Moor," answered Eschol.

"Does our bargain hold?"

"Yes, but only in part, I regret to say, but the fault is not mine."

"You break your word," said the corsair, knitting his brow.

"Suffer me to finish; you shall see that I am no wise guilty of disloyalty. In the first place, you shall have the two maidens I promised you."

"So far well, and our agreement remains intact."

"Not quite; the woman and the young man of whom I spoke to you have withdrawn from under my authority; consequently, I am unable to give them up to you."

"It matters little, provided I have the two slaves about whom we have treated.

"I pledge myself anew to deliver them to you."

"I ask no more."

"I will even give them up to you gratuitously."

"That is a piece of generosity to which I am not accustomed," rejoined the pirate, suddenly waxing suspicious. "To what motive am I to ascribe it?"

"It is that I have a petition to address to you."

"Speak freely."

"Our safety is gravely compromised on the continent. It is necessary that I should leave France immediately with my tribe. The land route would be very dangerous for us."

"In other words," interrupted the Moor, "you wish to go on board my carvel?"

"Precisely, and I will be most grateful to you if you consent to receive me and mine."

"I will do it willingly."

"Where will you land us?"

"I was to touch at one of the Italian ports to land your son; I will do so still if that will suit you."

"It will, perfectly. Besides the two maidens, what price do you ask for the passage?"

"Only a gold crown for each person."

"Be it so; we shall pay going on board."

"How many passengers will you be?"

"About fourscore, children included. We have, besides, horses and wagons."

"My ship is large; it will hold all your people and their baggage. Warn them without delay."

"They are all in readiness by this time."

"Let us go for them immediately," said the pirate.

And saying these words, he bent his steps towards the camp, accompanied by Léonor, and followed by his men. Bohemians and pirates past unheeded by the tower of St. Germined, whose warder slept as soundly as on the previous night, and in less than half an hour reached the huts of the Egyptians.

All was ready for the departure. These adventurers were endowed with a marvellous activity, and they were so accustomed to vagabondism, that packing up for a march was only sport to them.

Léonor conducted the Moorish captain to his dwelling. Toby Spiller came to receive them; but the spy was in great agitation; he accosted his master with a frightened air: the wretch was trembling in every limb.

"What is the matter?" demanded Eschol alarmed.

"Strange things are going on here. Satan himself must be at the bottom of it all."

"Tell me quickly what it is; we have no time to lose."

"The bodies of the maidens have disappeared."

"May Heaven confound you, bird of ill omen!" cried the Bohemian, mad with rage, and striking the ground with his foot; "you have allowed them to be carried off by your neglect."

"I swear by all the powers of heaven that I have

kept watch over them all the time," protested the spy.

"I have been mistaken in you," said the chief, throwing a contemptuous look on Spiller; "you are but a blockhead, after all, and I was wrong in intrusting you with a mission of importance."

Toby hung his head without replying. The Moorish captain, thinking himself trifled with, began to show his dissatisfaction, and told his men to look to their arms.

These menacing precautions were not very encouraging to Lénor. Still he endeavored to put a good face on the matter, and explained matters in the best way he could to the corsair, who was somewhat mollified.

"Well! since I find myself dissappointed," said the captain, "it is just that I should indemnify myself by raising the price of your passage."

"It is only natural," said Lénor.

"I asked only a crown a head."

"Exactly."

"Now I must have twenty."

"You want to ruin us," said Lénor piteously.

"Ask no reduction; I will make none."

The chief of the Bohemians, who saw himself at the pirate's mercy, was obliged to accede to the hard conditions imposed on him. Abdi-Rhaman added with an ironical smile:

"Of course you will give me this wretched servant, who allowed my slaves to be carried off."

"You will oblige me by taking him," replied Lénor; "you will thus save me the trouble of punishing him."

In vain did Toby Spiller protest that he was free by birth and implore his master's pity. Eschol handed him over to the pirates, who established their authority over him by throttling him.

Then the corsair, having been paid the sum agreed on, ordered the Bohemians to march silently and in good order towards the shore, whither his men were to escort them.

The tents were all folded, and the sheds, taken apart, placed on the wagons. In a few minutes the chief's dwelling was taken away. Two hours later the Bohemians assembled on the shore, embarked in succession, without the warders on St. Germined's Tower suspecting anything.

On the morrow, at daybreak, the African pirate, having gained the high sea, steered for Italy, bearing away on his carvel the whole tribe of the Bohemians. Of the encampment there remained only some worm-eaten boards and some confused rubbish not worth the taking away.

The inhabitants of St. Germined, at sight of the desert which reigned over the place, late so animated, could not get over their surprise. They walked hither and thither over the ground trampled and beaten down by the Bohemians, asking each other how those strangers could have disappeared so suddenly, and what way they had gone.

On examining some wretched shelter left standing, two burghers of the town discovered old Marah, crouched on a little straw, abandoned by Léonor. With many efforts they succeeded in drawing from the unhappy woman some indications as to the route taken by the Bohemians.

It was, indeed, time for the brigands to quit the country ; the very day after their departure the agents of justice, who unceasingly pursued them on the French territory, arrived at St. Germined. They could but convince themselves of the flight of the Bohemians and the negligence of the warders on the tower by the shore.



XIV.

IN THE RUINS.

LET us return to the vault where we left Judith alone, awaiting the return of those whom she styled her daughters. Daniel was the first she saw enter, in company with the venerable Father Hermanfred. The young man was surprised to find his sisters absent; and the sick woman, whom he first questioned by a look, appeared much alarmed.

"Mother, where are Jenny and Méryem?" demanded Daniel.

"You forgot old Marah in the encampment, and at my request they went in search of her."

"Are they long gone?"

"Several hours."

"Ah! my God! some mischief has certainly befallen them. Mother, whilst this good monk is with you, let me go and see how it is with them."

Instead of urging her son to go, the sick woman begged him to remain with her a few moments.

"Know you not," cried the impatient youth, "that the hours are precious, and that every passing minute may bring an irreparable misfortune?"

"In broad daylight who would dare, not even the miserable cause of most of my misfortunes, to attack two young girls such as they? Daniel, I have a favor to ask of you."

"What would you of me, O my mother?"

"You will not refuse me the last consolation I expect from you?"

"I will do all you wish. Command, I obey!"

"Last night you promised me to embrace the Christian faith."

"I will keep my word. I will even add that I ardently desire to receive baptism."

"Prepare yourself, then, and if the Father who deigns to come and assist me in my last moments sees no obstacle, I will beg of him to grant you the grace of the august sacrament in my presence."

"I will be happy to profess the same religion as you. If this minister of the Lord deems me worthy to enter the Church on this day, I will only regret the absence of my sisters, whose kind hearts would rejoice in my conversion."

Judith embraced her son weeping. The good friar, having questioned him, found him sufficiently instructed. The fact was that having lived amongst Christians, Daniel knew a portion of the truths which religion teaches.

Hermanfred gave some advice to the ardent young man, and, judging him in a state to receive baptism, he conferred it on him without hesitation. Then, whilst Daniel knelt collected in prayer, returning thanks to God, the monk addressed to the sick woman some words of consolation, blessed her, and returned hastily to Seilhac, where the functions of his holy ministry required his presence.

Scarcely was Father Hermanfred gone, when Judith called her son and said to him :

" Child, you can go now in search of your sisters. I hope God will bless your efforts."

Daniel did not need to be told twice ; he darted immediately out of the vaults, and bent his course towards the encampment of the Bohemians.

He arrived there, as we have said, during the absence of Lénor ; having presented himself a first time at his father's dwelling, he met only Toby Spiller. Not perceiving his sisters, he suspected that something bad had happened, and that thought overwhelmed him. Nevertheless, concealing his anguish as best he could, he summoned up all his coolness and sagacity.

The questions he addressed to the spy having no satisfactory result, he left the house to go through the encampment.

No vestige of the girls meeting his eyes anywhere, he sat down sad at heart in a quiet spot and began to reflect.

Daniel's mind was singularly penetrating. A certain something in Toby's face, some cunning looks of his, recurred to the young man's mind, and he guessed something of the truth.

Having returned to the house under pretence of taking away old Marah, he questioned Spiller anew, studied attentively the wretch's manœuvres, and, seeing him turn his eyes incessantly towards the same point of the partition, he guessed the existence of the closet. His decision was soon made.

Having abruptly ended his conversation with Toby, he feigned to retire and go out through the encampment. Perceiving that he was watched, he contrived to double on the spy, and secretly returned to prowl around the house. The concourse of visitors which thronged the Bohemian camp served his purpose well.

Seizing the moment when Spiller was engaged at the farther end of the room, Daniel unfastened a plank and darted a rapid glance into the secret closet within. He started at first in horror and surprise on seeing the inanimate bodies of the two young girls. Nevertheless, after a moment's reflection, he began to recover himself again, for he knew most of the strange secrets of the Bohemians.

"It is not without a motive," thought he, "that these bodies are kept so carefully; there is some deep-laid scheme here. But I will get to the bottom of it. I will convey my sisters to the vault at any cost."

Suiting the action to the idea, he went to work with all the caution which the circumstances required. Having convinced himself that Toby was but half attentive, and that he was even conversing with another Bohemian, he enlarged the opening he had made in the partition, carried off the two bodies in succession, wrapped them up as best he could in a large coverlit, laid them on his shoulders, and boldly marched through the Bohemian camp. Having crossed its boundaries unmolested and unnoticed, he

took the way to the ruins, walking as rapidly as his heavy load permitted. He reached the vault panting and exhausted, and was obliged to lay down his burden at the entrance to draw breath.

There, having thrown himself a moment on the bare ground, he reflected that it would be imprudent to show Judith the two girls in the state they were in. He went alone, therefore, to the sick woman.

The Bohemian, notwithstanding her weakness, raised herself on her couch on seeing her son enter.

"Have you succeeded, Daniel?" she said in a failing voice.

"Yes, I have found Jenny and Méryem," answered the young man with some embarrassment.

"Let them approach, that I may see them one last time, those angels to whom I shall owe eternal happiness."

"Unhappily they are not able to come at this moment; the treatment they have received has left them unable to support themselves."

"Alas! Lénor has killed them."

"Not so; I hope they will come to themselves again."

"I understand," said Judith.

After a pause, during which a tear rolled down her cheek, she added:

"I shall see them no more in this world, but I shall await them above."

Daniel kept silence. The sick woman resumed:

"Have you brought Marah?"

and "No, but I have seen her."

"Now, then, O my son," pursued Judith, whose glassy eye seemed to flash one last gleam; "now, then, hear my last words; I am going to declare to you my dying will, and I entreat you to fulfil it."

"Whatsoever you command I will faithfully execute," said Daniel.

"Well!" continued the dying Bohemian, "you will take care of Marah as you would of myself, for her blood flows in your veins. Never seek to punish your father; the religion of Christ to which you henceforth belong, condemns revenge; it even commands you to forgive your enemies and do good to them. Tell him rather that on her death-bed the unfortunate Judith forgot the treatment she received, the wrongs he unceasingly inflicted upon her, and that she prayed for him at the moment of leaving this world. You will add that the Christian law has power to reinstate the greatest criminals before God, when they embrace it, fulfil its precepts, and repent sincerely.

"Your wishes shall be punctually fulfilled; I will faithfully conform to them."

"I expected no less from your generous heart. Your filial piety is incomparable."

"I accomplish a duty."

"Now," resumed the sick woman, "I bequeath to you as a sacred heritage, Jenny and Méryem, if God preserves their life; you will protect and defend them."

"My affection for my sisters makes that duty a pleasure."

"There is an important revelation which I owe to you, O my son, and still more to the two girls. I have too long delayed; but I hope my strength will permit me to go through with it. Come nearer; my voice becomes every moment weaker."

Daniel bent over his mother's bed, and almost glued his ear to her lips, for her life was ebbing fast away.

"Jenny and Méryem are not your sisters," said Judith.

The young man started, and made a gesture of astonishment.

"It is impossible," he murmured; "the fraternal affection I feel for them contradicts your words, O my mother!"

"I protest I have told you the truth," said Judith in a voice already choked by the death-rattle. "Lénor and I never had a child but you."

Daniel was much affected on learning that no tie of kindred connected him with the two girls.

"Jenny and Méryem are not even sisters," added the dying woman. "One is the daughter of the king and queen of our tribe, who died when we were coming to France the first time; the other was carried off by your father, from the village of La Chappelle, near Paris, during the *landit* fair—"

The young man heard this declaration with amazement. His mother wanted to continue; but her voice

had quite failed her, the words expired on her lips. She had but strength to throw a parting look on Daniel, and murmur the sacred names of Jesus and Mary; then her eyes closed, and her head fell back inanimate on her couch. Judith had breathed her last.

Daniel at first thought it was a swoon; but soon the Bohemian's legs began to stiffen, and the young man perceived that all was over. Overwhelmed with grief he dropped his head on his breast and melted into tears: he had lost in one day his mother and probably his sisters.

Yet the thought of the Christian's God, to whom he had but a few hours belonged, consoled him. He ardently invoked the Lord, and resignation revisiting his soul alleviated his keen anguish. He printed a last kiss on Judith's pale brow, and moved away a few paces from that mournful scene.

Then the remembrance of Jenny and Méryem recurred to his mind. He remembered that he had left them inanimate at the entrance of the vault, and he ran to seek them. He could now take them in without alarming his mother. So Daniel brought the two bodies and laid them on the floor in the death-chamber. Then, by the dim light of a lamp, he contemplated them in mournful silence.

"Which of these two young girls," he asked himself, "is the stranger carried off by Lénor Eschol? Which is of the race of our last king? Alas! my mother was unable to explain herself fully, and she

carries a part of her secret with her to the grave. How am I to succeed in restoring to her parents the victim carried off from the *landit* fair? they are both alike. Moreover, they both continue motionless; who knows if they have not already become the prey of pitiless death?"

Kneeling beside the unhappy girls, and bending over their motionless faces, Daniel regarded them with indescribable grief. All at once he gave a cry of joy; by certain unmistakeable signs he discovered that his adopted sisters were only sunk in a lethargic slumber.

Reflecting on this he remembered that several Bohemians, and especially Lénor, possessed the secret of a beverage which had the power of giving the appearance of death to those who took it. He understood that a potion of this kind had been administered to Jenny and Méryem, for a purpose which he could not divine.

These reflections tranquillized him a little. He sat down between his dead mother and his adopted sisters, as they, too, lay apparently lifeless, and he prayed as the monk of Seilhac had taught him.

Next day, judging it necessary to know what was passing in the Bohemian encampment, he quitted the vault, and directed his course to the hill at the foot of which the huts of the adventurers rose the day before.

Even before he reached the place he heard of the mysterious departure of the tribe, and the thousand

suppositions afloat on the subject. Pursuing his way he visited the camp ground, and perceived old Marah, who was, as we have said, left behind. The unfortunate old woman, sitting at the edge of a ditch, appeared insensible to her deserted state, and regarded Daniel with a vacant eye.

Still, she recognized her grandson. The young man made her stand up, and, taking a lonely by-way, brought her to the vault. There he questioned her ; but he was long in getting at the truth, amid the chaos of her vague and incoherent answers. At last he found out a part of what had taken place in his absence. He understood that Lénor, doubtless fearing the importunities of the girls, had given them a powerful narcotic, so that being deprived of sense and feeling, he might the more easily convey them wherever he pleased. Daniel's conjectures were perfectly correct, as we know.

Meanwhile the young man awaited in increasing and almost indescribable anxiety the awaking of Jenny and Méryem. He trembled, seeing how the lethargy continued, lest death should succeed to this forced sleep. In vain did he try to drive away this afflicting thought ; it returned incessantly to torment him.

At length, at the end of the third day, Méryem opened her eyes. Daniel ran to her and cautiously raised her head. Then, as she was recovering but slowly from that lethargic state, he shook her quickly and she was soon quite awake.

Jenny, in her turn, gave sign of life. By the cares of the young Bohemian both girls were soon able to sit up. They appeared astonished, and looked successively from Daniel to old Marah, and the lifeless form of Judith lying within two paces of where they sat. The old woman seemed to recover a little consciousness, and showed some joy on seeing the girls restored to life. As the latter strove in vain to comprehend what had passed, and why they found themselves in a vault, Daniel spoke.

"Return thanks to God," said he, "for He has watched over you, and prevented you from becoming the victims of evil purposes."

"What has happened, then?" they asked at once.

"I am going to explain to you."

And having seated them, he told them of the departure of the tribe, Judith's end, and their own lethargy. These details reminded them of the scene which preceded their swoon; they described to Daniel their last interview with Lénor, and proved to him that he was not mistaken in his conjectures.

But great was the sorrow of Jenny and Méryem when they knew that Judith was dead, which fact the lifeless body before them left them no room to doubt. They approached the corpse, already livid and ghastly, tenderly and reverently kissed the pallid brow, shed abundant tears, and knelt to pray.

The first thing to be considered was the decent interment of Judith's mortal remains. Daniel himself dug

his mother's grave in the floor of the vault, and there he respectfully laid the corpse. He covered the grave with a large stone from the ruins, and on it he engraved a cross.



XV.

RETURN TO PARIS.

AFTER having rendered the last sad duties to his mother, Daniel made the two girls acquainted with the dying revelations of Judith. He informed them that they were not his sisters, and added :

" Nevertheless, my mother earnestly besought me to watch over you and protect you as a brother. Although my affection for you rendered such charges unnecessary, still the dying injunctions of my mother gave, if I may say so, a more sacred title to our relations ; for you considered her as your mother, and she, in that short interval beginning with the hour of her reconciliation with God, and ending with her death, showed a mother's affection towards you. There existed between you, therefore, the tie of a holy adoption, the memory of which shall be ever engraved on my heart. Jenny, Méryem, I will not desert you."

The girls heard Daniel with an interest easy to imagine. Touched by the young man's noble and generous sentiments, they exclaimed with one voice :

" Although we belong to different families, we will still continue to call you our brother ; for you are truly so, if not by right of birth, at least by that of affection. Brother, do not refuse to call us your sisters !"

"Your words overwhelm me with joy," cried Daniel. "My beloved sisters, my life shall be henceforth devoted to you, and I will justify the title you offer me by endeavoring to repair the wrong done you by my parents. And he held out a hand to each.

But Jenny and Méryem could not recover from their astonishment at what they had just learned. In vain did they search their early recollections, they could find there no trace of the facts related by Daniel. The first years of their life were lost in a dim and shadowy haze. Time and the events of their wandering life had effaced all. Moreover, Judith's narrative, cut short by death, left it uncertain which of the two girls was French.

On the evening of the day when Jenny and Méryem had recovered from their lethargic sleep, Daniel having gone out to gather honeycombs, had repaired to the town with the intention of buying some other provisions. He there heard of the arrival of the constables. He thought it necessary to make this known to his adoptive sisters, and did not conceal from them the uneasiness he felt.

"What have we to fear," asked Méryem, "since we have never done any harm?"

"Your conscience is, doubtless, at ease; you have had no share in the excesses committed by our tribe. For myself, thank God, I can safely aver that I have never been guilty of any crime. But still we lived amongst the Bohemians who are now under the ban of justice."

"That can be no reason for believing us guilty of their crimes."

"I admit that; but still in the eyes of the law we will necessarily be held for accomplices in acts with which we had nothing to do. They will make us responsible for numberless robberies, sacrileges, and other odious crimes committed by our band wherever it has passed. Public hatred will pursue us, like the other Bohemians, with relentless fury."

"We will protest our innocence," said Jenny in her turn.

"They will not believe us."

"Wherefore?" inquired the girl; "we will declare that we are Christians."

"Our companions have too much abused that sacred name, of which they have made a hypocritical mask to practice their deplorable trade; they will accuse us of profaning once more the religion of Jesus Christ."

"What is going to become of us?" sighed Méryem. "We cannot remain much longer in this vault."

"I have already been thinking of quitting it."

"What do you propose doing, brother?"

"I have some money, and I mean, first of all, to purchase other garments for us."

"After that, what do you think of doing?"

"I will procure some merchandise which we shall try to sell going through France."

"The idea seems to me a good one," observed Jenny; "when is it to be put into execution?"

"As soon as possible. We shall set out as soon as we have other garments."

"What sort of clothes shall we take?"

"I will disguise myself as a pedlar, and you will clothe yourselves in a manner suitable to that. I will present you as my sisters, and old Marah as our grandmother. In that way, we may escape suspicion."

"Whither shall we direct our course?" asked Méryem.

"We will try to reach Paris."

"Would it not be better to quit France, where the edicts against the Bohemians are so rigorous?"

"We have strong reasons for remaining in this country."

"What are they!"

"My mother, when dying, told me that one of you had been carried off from the neighborhood of Paris, near the village of La Chapelle. It is, therefore, necessary, in order to clear up the mystery which overhangs that event, that we should visit the environs of the great city. There is somewhere a family in mourning, which it is our duty to console, if we can."

"Very true," said Jenny, "it is fitting that we seek to repair the wrong committed. Let us hope that Providence will bless our endeavors. I have a presentiment that they shall one day be crowned with success."

"So we are all agreed on that point?"

"Perfectly," answered both girls. "Your project is wise and rational."

Strong in the approval of his companions, the young man immediately busied himself with preparations for the journey. At the end of some days, having brought the garments to the vault, he quitted, with Marah, Jenny, and Méryem, the Bohemian costume, and thought only of getting away from St. Germined.

One morning Daniel, his grandmother and his adopted sisters, mounted a one horse carriole full of merchandise, and set forward.

In this equipage the travellers journeyed to Paris, which it took them two months to reach. They were obliged to use great caution, for the Egyptians being severely proscribed were carefully sought out, and when discovered, were severely punished. On reaching the capital, Daniel and his companions hired two small rooms in a retired street, and there settled themselves in the best way they could.

Ever since they were separated from the band of Egyptians, Lénor's son and his sisters led the most regular life, scrupulously fulfilling all the duties of religion. The liberty of doing good, the escape from a depraved surrounding, the peace they enjoyed, rendered them so happy, that they desired nothing more in this world. Under the influence of this new existence, old Marah gradually recovered the lucidity of her mind, and began again to take some interest in the things of life.

A short time after their arrival in Paris, Jenny and Méryem requested Daniel to take them to St. Denis and La Chapelle, where each of them hoped to find a father, a mother, a family. Neither one nor the other wished to be the child of the Bohemians; the most obscure birth, provided it was Christian, appeared to them preferable.

To satisfy the legitimate wish of his adopted sisters, the young man one day prepared his carriole, loaded it with divers wares, put Jenny and Méryem into it, and took the way to St. Denis. It was not without emotion that the girls trod the soil of the vast plain where the *landit* fair was held, and breathed that air which to one of them, at least, was native air.

The three former members of the Bohemian tribe passed through the streets of St. Denis and those of several adjoining villages, everywhere making inquiries, but without success. At last they came to La Chapelle, and there their search had no better success. Despairing of finding what they sought, they ceased to ask any questions. Reaching one of the last houses they stopped; a woman had made a sign to them that she wanted to buy some things.

It was the dwelling of Master Etienne Belval, and Annette, Jeanne's nurse, appeared on the threshold. Daniel went to the door to show his wares.

During this time, Jenny and Méryem regarded with curious eyes the spacious mansion, little dreaming that one of them had there, under that opulent roof, a father, a mother, weeping her loss for years long.

Neither did it ever occur to Master Belval and his wife that their beloved daughter so long wept in vain was at that moment under their windows.

Annette's purchases finished, Daniel got into the carriole again, and the horse bore away towards Paris the young man and his adoptive sisters. They had reached their destination without suspecting it. It was the will of God that the mystery half revealed at Judith's death-bed should not yet be revealed.

Daniel and his companions, discouraged by this ill success, and not knowing how to accomplish their end, gave up for the time all thoughts of continuing their search. Besides, it was requisite that they should devote themselves exclusively to their little traffic, which barely gave them a living.



XVI.

AT SEA.

WHILST Daniel and his adopted sisters decided on repairing to Paris, and accomplished their project as we have related, Abdi-Rhaman's carvel put out to sea, bearing away the tribe of Bohemians. Lénor Eschol and his band were at first well treated; they were welcomed by the crew, and the captain appeared most attentive to their chief.

Lénor, in accordance with the agreement made with the pirate, thought to sail towards Italy. But, after the lapse of four or five days, he discovered that the corsair was deceiving him, and was steering right for the African coast.

The duke of the Bohemians, uneasy at this act of signal bad faith, thought it his duty to remonstrate with the commander of the carvel; he repaired to his cabin, and said to him:

“Lord Moor, you are not steering for the coast of the Peninsula, as you promised us on land.”

“What has put such an idea into your mind?” demanded the pirate with an equivocal smile.

“I am well aware of the course you are now taking.”

“You know nothing of navigation,” answered Abdi-Rhaman with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, and he turned his back on the Bohemian.

“Allow me to insist,” said Lénor in a tone of vexation; “I see clearly that you want to impose on me.”

"I! not the least in the world."

"I am not so ignorant of nautical affairs as to confound the African line with that of Italy."

"You are in error."

"I maintain what I have affirmed."

"Your mistake lies in imagining that a Barbary vessel steers like a Christian vessel," observed the corsair in a jeering tone.

"Nautical rules are everywhere the same, and I cannot accept such an excuse. To turn one's back on the proposed end was never a means of attaining it."

"Since you suspect me, I am willing to justify myself. I steer to the southwest in order to double more easily the southern point of the island of Sardinia."

"It would have been shorter to bear right on Italy; I know of nothing that prevented you, and it was agreed between us."

"It is easy to direct a voyage when one incurs no responsibility."

"Good sense inspired me with the observations I have made."

"You seem to be very simple."

"It is easier to jest than to reply."

"How! do you, a robber chief, imagine that I, a Barbary pirate, will, in order to convey you to the Peninsula, steer right into the Corsican channel, or that I would be so mad as to get into the Straits of Bonifacio, the very highway of Christian vessels? In sooth, that were something curious."

There was no answering this. Eschol began to think that the captain was acting in good faith, and he confessed himself mistaken.

But, the following days, it was impossible for him to doubt that the corsair was steering westward; then Abdi-Rhaman, instead of turning back to the east, as the Bohemian still hoped, gave orders to steer directly for the Barbary coast.

This time the corsair's perfidy was manifest, and Lénor accosted him in a wrathful mood. Abdi-Rhaman received him with cool contempt.

"What means this manœuvre?" demanded Lénor quickly.

"Have I to account to you for my actions?" answered the pirate.

"Yes, in virtue of our agreement."

"Of what do you complain?"

"Can you seriously ask me such a question?"

"I never jest."

"Then I will remind you that you engaged to convey us to other shores."

"I steer my vessel as I please. On board here I am absolute master."

"Confess, then, that you are violating our stipulations; you will, at least, have the merit of candor."

"You pretend to say that I am breaking my word?"

"I do."

"Explain yourself."

"Instead of taking us to Italy, as you promised, you are making for Africa."

"Well! if it please you better, I will confess the truth," said the corsair with cutting irony; "we are going to Tunis."

"Wherefore did you deceive me?"

"I follow exactly the example you recently gave me."

"What do you mean?" cried Lénor, dismayed to find himself caught in the snare.

"Do you not remember the bargain we made at St. Germined, and the two maidens you were to deliver to me?"

"I have not forgotten it."

"How have you fulfilled your engagements? Answer me that!"

"You know well it was no fault of mine; the maidens escaped me."

"Am I bound to believe you?"

"I gave you unquestionable proofs."

"What care I for your proofs. You will understand that I do not accept them."

"We made other arrangements, and the enormous sum I paid into your hands as the price of our passage indemnifies you for the loss of those two slaves."

"Nothing can indemnify me for that deception. The sale of the damsels in Barbary was intended to pay the cost of our voyage."

"But it is an infamous trick you have played on me," howled Eschol, beside himself with rage.

"You may as well keep cool," said the Moor with a malicious chuckle which suddenly enlightened the

Bohemian chief as to the secret designs of the pirate.

"I understand, I understand," he cried in a tone of despair; "you intend us to replace the two slaves."

"I give you joy of your penetration," replied the captain in ironical accents; "I will count one to you and your companions."

"So you think of selling us in Africa?"

"It is my intention."

"That will be a villainous act; it will cover you with indelible shame."

"And wherefore? Is it not my trade? You were a land rover, I am a sea rover. Each one carries on his trade as best he can in the element he has chosen."

"We will not allow ourselves to be sold without resistance.'

"You are in my power. The wisest part for you is to submit. Fortune is capricious; you must learn to resign yourself at times to the hardships it imposes."

Overcome by the pirates' impetuosity, Lénor passed from threats to supplications; but the captain was unmoved by one or the other. He put an end to the conversation by these words uttered in an imperious tone:

"I tell you we are but losing time in idle discussion. My determination is taken, it is irrevocable."

He thereupon dismissed the bandit, who retired with hell in his soul.

Lénor, scarce knowing what he did, announced the

fatal news to his companions. The Bohemians gave a shout of grief and rage; they then burst into a terrible fury. They became clamorous, and manifested intentions not favorable to the crew of the carvel. The pirate ordered them to be quiet and desist from their hostile demonstrations. They answered defiantly, grouped themselves together, and tried to mar and organize. Some had already laid hold of hatchets and handspikes, and were preparing to make use of them.

But on a sign from the captain his two hundred pirates rushed upon them, disarmed them without any trouble, throttled them, and threw them pell-mell into the hold. The women and children were left at liberty on the deck, where they were a prey to the brutal outrages of the pirates.

Thenceforward the sea rovers kept no more terms with their late passengers, now their captives. The captain even permitted them to divide them amongst themselves, so as afterwards to receive the price of their sale. Every day the Bohemians were brought some hours on deck, where they could speak with their wives and children.

According as the carvel approached the African coast, the sorrow of the adventurers increased. They remained on deck, moody, silent, and motionless, their eyes fixed anxiously on the horizon, where they feared every moment to see the land appear. Their grief contrasted with the hilarity of the Moors, rejoicing to return to their own country.

At length the Tunisian coast was sighted. The vessel, which had stopped on its way at Bizerta, then at Porto-Farino, entered the port of Tunis. The captain, Abdi-Rhaman, brought back no booty save the Bohemians. He landed them immediately, and offered them for sale. Lénor Eschol and eight of his companions fell to the officers of the Bey, who levied in kind the tribute on each human cargo. They were destined for the government woodyards. The other members of the band, men, women and children, were consigned to different masters, who drove them before them, chained together like a herd of cattle.

So commenced the just punishment inflicted by Providence on those brigands black with robbery, perfidy, and all manner of crimes.



XVII.

NEW TRIALS.

Six months had passed since Daniel and the girls, with old Marah, had arrived in Paris. They inhabited one of the last houses in the Rue St. Denis, not far from the La Chapelle road, and they lived modestly and decently by their daily labor.

They enjoyed that peaceful existence, blessing God unceasingly for having delivered them from the miseries, the vexations, and the infamy of the tribe of Bohemians. Jenny and Méryem, freed from the unceasing persecutions of Lénor, had grown strong, and their beauty shone with full lustre. Marah likewise benefited by that tranquil life, notwithstanding her advanced age; the state of her mind was more satisfactory, and she sometimes joined in conversation.

Nothing remarkable had occurred in that happy household during the months of which we speak. Daniel and his adoptive sisters had made new inquiries in the direction of St. Denis. But the remembrance of the misfortune which had befallen Etienne Belval twelve years before was entirely effaced. At last they began to ask each other if the child carried off from the *landit* fair, amid the immense concourse of people assembled from all parts of France, had been really born in the neighborhood of Paris, and they inclined to believe the contrary. They gave up all

idea of unravelling the mystery, and left to Providence the care of the future.

Heaven had decreed that other trials should visit those virtuous souls so submissive to the divine will.

One evening Daniel came home, as usual, after a day of toil. He found the table ready and covered with the modest repast prepared by Jenny and Méryem. He sat down at the upper end, beside his old grandmother, and was preparing to do honor to the humble meal.

Scarcely had he touched the food set before him when a confused noise of loud voices and clashing of steel was heard on the winding stairs that led to the lodgings.

"What is the matter?" said Daniel, rising in some uneasiness.

"I cannot imagine," answered Jenny, listening. "One would say it was armed men coming up here."

"God grant that nothing bad be going to happen," said Méryem, turning pale.

Just then a violent knock shook the door. The two girls started to their feet all trembling. Daniel went to open the door.

A captain, followed by two sergeants, hastily entered the room.

"Our business lies here, I think," said the officer, throwing a curious look around the apartment.

"There must be some mistake," Daniel ventured to say.

"None whatever," said the captain.

"What is your will, then?"

"Are not you Daniel Eschol?" demanded the captain, laying his large hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Yes, that is my name."

"You are the son of Léonor Eschol, chief of a Bohemian tribe?"

"I will not deny it."

"In that case, you must follow us."

"Whither?"

"We have orders to arrest and conduct you to the Châtelet prison."

"Of what am I accused?" asked the young man in a tone of anguish; "I have never done hurt or harm to any one."

"You are not ignorant," said the captain, "of the rigorous decrees which proscribe the Bohemians, especially in this royal city?"

"I belong no more to the tribe which my father commanded. I live peacefully here, by my own labor, with my grandmother and my sisters. I do not hide myself, and it is easy to establish the truth of what I say."

"It may be all true, but we have received a warrant for your arrest; our duty is to execute it to the letter. If you succeed in justifying yourself, so much the better, and we shall have no objection."

Saying these words, he turned to the sergeants and told them to seize Daniel.

"There is no need to use violence," said the un-

happy young man ; “ I will not attempt a useless resistance.”

And he gave himself up to the soldiers. Before crossing the threshold of his lodging, he turned to Jenny and Méryem, where they stood trembling and dismayed, and he asked the captain :

“ Do you purpose taking these women ?”

“ Who are they ?”

“ My sisters and my grandmother.”

“ We have no orders concerning them ; there is question only of you.”

“ God be praised that the beings I love most in the world are spared,” replied Daniel.

Then, with the officer’s permission, he addressed the sobbing girls :

“ Have confidence in the Lord, dearest sisters ! Be courageous, and do not be cast down by adversity. It will be easy for me, I hope, to prove my innocence, and then I can return to you. Take care of my grandmother.”

Jenny and Méryem promised, weeping, not to neglect Marah. Then Daniel bade them all a sad farewell, and gave himself the signal of departure to the soldiers, who were not a little affected by this scene.

An hour later the young man was shut up in a cell of the Châtelet, and the most cruel grief reigned in the place he had left. Jenny, Méryem, and Marah herself, were plunged in the deepest sorrow for the misfortune which had befallen their protector ; they feared that Daniel’s imprisonment might be of long duration.

XVIII.

THE SENTENCE.

His character of Bohemian had caused the arrest of the unfortunate Daniel. The most heinous charges were brought against him ; he was accused of being either the perpetrator or the accessory of a multitude of crimes committed during the sojourn of his tribe in France.

The cunning spies, unceasingly occupied in inspecting the several districts of Paris, had at length discovered, we cannot say in what way, that a man bearing the name of one of the chiefs of the adventurers dwelt in the capital. They had denounced him as having come thither in despite of the royal ordinances and edicts which formally forbade the Bohemians to abide within the city.

After having undergone a preliminary examination, Daniel was brought before the judges. He strenuously denied the charges made against him, protesting his perfect innocence.

Seeing that they did not believe him, he gave the clear and simple history of his life, described the circumstances under which his conversion was brought about, and the motives which had brought him to Paris. He concealed nothing.

“ You know all that concerns me,” he added in conclusion ; “ you see I am innocent. I demand that

you promptly restore me to liberty, not for my own sake, but for that of the three helpless women I have sworn to protect."

The judges heard him attentively; but his assertions did not convince them. They told him that they could not give credence to his words.

"Why do you refuse to admit the truth of my statements?" asked Daniel in a tone of the most poignant grief.

"Because you bring no proof in support of your assertions," he was answered.

In fact, Daniel possessed no authentic document certifying his conversion and his profession of Christianity. The judges knew the hypocrisy of the Bohemians, and the audacity wherewith they covered themselves with the mask of religion to deceive the people. They treated his statements as fallacious, and set them aside from the defence.

Neither did the court accept the motives whereby Daniel explained his coming to Paris. It regarded as an absurd story the carrying off of Jeanne, twelve years before, and even refused to order an investigation.

The judges thought that the accused wanted to exculpate himself by clever falsehoods, and that conviction made his situation still worse. Furthermore, by an unaccountable fatality, crimes committed some time before, the authors of which could not be discovered, were laid to his charge; numerous proofs, apparently conclusive, were produced. Thencefor-

ward the condemnation of the unfortunate young man appeared inevitable.

After two weeks of trial and deliberation, Daniel was brought before his judges to hear his sentence. He was condemned to capital punishment. Noonday was ringing from the great clock of the palace, and the sentence was to be executed at the same hour on the following day, on the gibbet of Montfaucon.

The young man did not tremble on hearing this terrible decree, which cut short his blameless life in the flower of his years. He offered to God this great trial, and submitted as a Christian to the blow that struck him.

Remanded to prison to await the hour of execution, he asked for a priest, and they promised that one should be brought.

An hour had scarcely passed after Daniel's return from the court, when the door of his dungeon opened. He expected to behold the minister of Christ, and was preparing to welcome him; but his surprise equalled his joy on perceiving Jenny and Méryem, his adoptive sisters, supporting between them his aged grandmother. The two girls advanced, all in tears.

"You here!" he exclaimed.

"Brother, we have heard of your sentence," answered Jenny in a voice choked with sobs.

"What! so soon?"

"Did you think we had forgotten you?"

"Oh no! I never imagined such a thing."

"We followed your trial with the greatest anxiety."

"Alas! men have refused to admit my innocence. I die the victim of the crimes of my race, although I never had any part therein."

"At the news of this fearful sentence," said Jenny, "we asked and obtained the favor of seeing you for the last time."

"May ye be ever blessed, O my beloved sisters, for your unfailing affection: it consoles me in the midst of my misfortunes, and I will die with less regret, since it has been given us to see each other again."

"Why, oh why," said Méryem, her face bedewed with tears, "must we lose you without your having done anything to deserve such a fate?"

"Would you rather I should die guilty?" replied Daniel with a sad smile. "Let us remember all the sacred teachings of religion; let us welcome the divine hopes it holds out to us, and whilst separating on earth let us not forget that in heaven we shall meet again."

For two hours did those sorrowing friends discourse together on this consoling topic. They thus escaped for a while the poignant anguish of the present, and renewed their courage by the assured promises of religion.

At last they had to separate, and it was a heart-rending scene.

"What is going to become of you, poor sisters?"

murmured Daniel; “who will protect you when I am no more? who will provide for your wants?”

“Pray to God, brother, that He may soon call us to Himself,” answered Jenny in a choking voice, “What shall we do in this world without you?”

“Forgive the wandering of my grief,” said the prisoner; “I afflict when I ought to encourage you. The Lord, who always proportions His graces, and His assistance to the trial, will not abandon you. We have in heaven a Father who loves us; He will cover you with His Almighty arm.”

Jenny and Méryem, unable to utter a word, held out their hands, which he pressed to his heart. Then, having kissed the white hairs of his grandmother, he pointed to heaven, as their final meeting-place, and said, “Farewell! farewell!”

The jailer would allow these unfortunates to remain no longer together; he pushed the girls and old Marah out of the cell, and the door closed heavily on the condemned.

Daniel threw himself on the damp straw which formed his bed, and wept long and freely. Then, kneeling down, he prayed with fervor, and that fervent elevation of his soul to God refreshed, consoled, strengthened him. When he arose, he had renewed in the depth of his heart the cruel sacrifice of his life. He calmly awaited the arrival of the minister of God.

The priest did not come till evening. He was a Franciscan friar. His venerable air, the mildness of

his look, the sanctity that shone on his face, immediately won him the sympathy and confidence of the condemned.

This monk, whom the reader already knows, was called Father Grambert, and he was often sent to visit prisoners.

The servant of God having seated himself on a stone bench, which likewise served as a couch for the condemned, Daniel knelt down, confessed his faults, and received the sacrament which effaces them by the virtue of Christ's blood.

Father Grambert, touched by the faith and piety of the young man, remained long with him. It was night when he arose to leave him.

"My son," said he with ineffable tenderness, "I am obliged to leave you, but I will see you again tomorrow morning."

"Permit me, Father, to ask a favor of you before you leave me."

"Speak, friend! be sure that I will do my utmost to fulfil your last wishes."

"There is in this city," replied the young man, "an aged woman, my grandmother, and two young girls, my adoptive sisters, whom my death will leave without comfort or support."

"Are the young girls connected with you by the ties of blood?"

"No, Father."

"By what title, then, do you interest yourself in them?"

"I was brought up with them, and long believed them to be my sisters."

And the condemned related briefly to the monk the events which make the subject of this tale. According as Daniel advanced in his narrative, Father Grambert gave signs of strong emotion. When the young man came to speak of Father Hermanfred, the friar exclaimed :

"I know him well; he is my intimate friend, and endowed with the most eminent virtues."

Daniel went on, and repeated what Judith had told him on her death-bed.

"Great God!" interrupted Father Grambert, "is it possible!"

The prisoner not knowing what meaning to assign to this exclamation, and interpreting it as a doubt, resumed in sorrowful accents :

"Father! I tell the truth. What would it avail me to tell a falsehood in these last hours of my life?"

"My son, I am very far from disputing the truth of your recital. You did not understand my reason for interrupting you. Not only do I believe you, but I am in a position to corroborate your statement."

Daniel, stupefied, regarded the friar without answering.

"I partly know the facts which your mother revealed to you on her death-bed."

"Who could have made them known to you!" demanded the young man, more and more astonished.

"I heard years ago of the carrying off of a little

girl in the way you mention, and it can be no other than one of your adoptive sisters."

"The ways of Providence are mysterious," murmured Daniel.

"Say rather that they are adorable."

"You know the parents of the child?"

"Perfectly. Her father is called Etienne Belval, and he dwells in the village of La Chapelle."

"I will leave this world in peace," said Daniel, raising his eyes to heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude, "since my sisters are henceforth secure of safe protection."

"Why speak you of dying?" said Father Grambert; "the communication you have made me will save your life at the same time that it restores happiness to a virtuous family. But let us not lose time; we must first think of you."

"What influence can these facts, which I have already made known to my judges, have on my fate?"

"Do you not understand?"

"I confess I do not."

"They will enable me to prove your innocence and the sincerity of your professions."

Immediately, without answering the multiplied questions of Daniel, the friar hastily quitted the cell and ran to the judges. Notwithstanding the advanced hour, and thanks to the veneration of which he was everywhere the object, he succeeded in seeing the principal one amongst them. He told him what had happened, and added :

"The young man has told the truth; he is innocent."

"I know not as to that," answered the judge; "but the sentence is passed, the king has confirmed it, and it is not for us to impede the course of justice."

"What is to be done?" said the monk anxiously.

"Apply to the prince."

"He left Paris to-day; I will not have time to reach him."

"I can do nothing."

"In virtue of the authority you possess, order a reprieve. I have in my hands all the proofs of Daniel's innocence; let me only have time to produce them."

"The king alone can suspend a capital execution."

"In such a case, where there is question of the victim of an evident judicial mistake, every honest man ought to be disposed to take a responsibility."

"That is your opinion?"

"Assuredly."

"It is not mine."

"You refuse me, then?"

"We cannot change a sentence regularly and formally given."

"So you are not afraid," replied the indignant monk, "to allow an innocent man to perish?"

"The condemned cannot be innocent," said the judge coldly.

"I protest he is not guilty."

"And I affirm that we cannot be mistaken."

"Accursed be your pride," exclaimed Father Grambert. "Sooner than admit that human justice

is fallible, you would commit a judicial murder. Your heart is as hard as stone, and I cannot hope to soften it. God will do what you refuse. But, know that I will demand justice against you, and obtain it."

With these words the holy monk retired. Nothing remained for him but to see the king. But Charles VII. was on his way to one of his castles in the provinces. Now, how was he to get speech immediately of the Prince?

Whilst Father Grambert was revolving these difficulties in his mind, an idea suddenly occurred to him : he thought of George Hérielle, his old friend, and the king's goldsmith. He plunged immediately into the heart of the city, where his friend resided, and briefly told him the affair.

"I want you to help me out of this dilemma," added he.

"What is to be done," demanded the goldsmith.

"Mount your horse instantly, for time is precious, and a man's life is at stake ; ride as fast as you can after the king ; when you overtake him, see him immediately, obtain a reprieve for Daniel Eschol, and return to Montfaucon before noon to-morrow."

"It is difficult, not to say impossible," replied George. "Still, I will spare nothing to succeed."

"You will bear in mind," said the friar, "that the man we are trying to save can alone give us any useful information concerning the daughter of our friend Belval."

The friar had scarcely finished when George Hérielle ordered his horse to be brought, jumped into the saddle, and traversed at full speed the streets of the metropolis. Soon he had gained the country, and dashed at a gallop along the road the king had taken.

Next day, at eleven o'clock, the goldsmith had not returned. Then a doleful train issued from the gate of the Châtelet, wound along the public road, and directed its course towards the gibbet of Montfauçon. The magistrates who had condemned Daniel marched at its head ; then came a troop of sergeants-at-arms, in the midst of whom was seen the prisoner, assisted by Father Grambert. The latter looked troubled and anxious. The monk knew well that there were a thousand chances to one that the reprieve would arrive too late : an hour only remained to the victim.

The monk had vainly renewed his application to the magistrates ; again he was sternly refused, and the order was given to march.

Daniel advanced, his head erect, his step firm, as became innocence. The crowd which followed him, although animated by an implacable hatred of the Bohemians, appeared touched by his Christian resignation and noble attitude ; it had welcomed with joy the announcement of his pardon.

At the appointed hour the funeral train appeared at the place of execution ; the gallows was ready, and the hangman at his post. Father Grambert threw a long and inexpressibly anxious look on the way by

which George Hérielle was to approach ; but no sign of him appeared.

Then the friar besought the magistrates once again to grant a delay, were it but for an hour ; his entreaties were disregarded. The monk, hoping no more but in God alone, pronounced the final absolution over the victim's head, received his recommendations, and handed him over to the hangman. In a few minutes the executioner had passed the rope around Daniel's neck, and prepared to launch the unfortunate young man into eternity.

There was a moment of solemn expectation, during which Father Grambert and his friends again searched the horizon with poignant anguish, but without perceiving anything on the road.

Twelve o'clock struck ; it was the signal. The hangman seized the end of the cord fastened to a pully, and when the last stroke sounded on the bronze, he hoisted the condemned into the air. A cry of intense, inexpressible grief burst from the friar.

All at once a mighty clamor was raised, and all eyes were turned to the high road. In the midst of a cloud of dust a horseman dashed with headlong speed towards the gallows, waving in his hand a large parchment.

"It is the reprieve !" cried the crowd ; "hasten to cut the rope !"

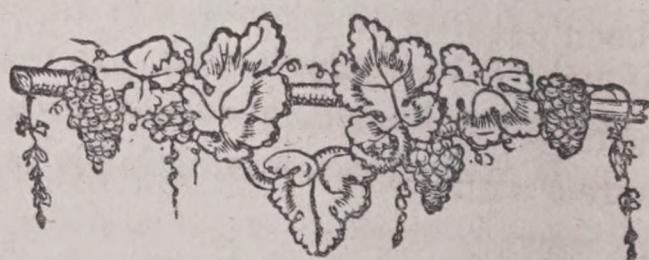
The magistrates remained motionless. But a soldier, more humane than these stony-hearted functionaries, cut the rope with his halberd, and Daniel fell

to the ground ; another soldier hastened to loosen the fatal knot, and the prisoner's struggles ceased ; he recovered his consciousness, cast an astonished look around, and succeeded in raising himself. He was on his feet by the time the horseman stopped near the foot of the gallows.

It was, indeed, George Hérielle, bearing in writing the royal order to postpone the execution. The judges withdrew disconcerted, muttering that such a thing was never seen, and that it was a crime against justice to obstruct its course.

Daniel thanked his deliverer, pressed the friar's hands to his lips and heart, bowed his gratitude to the sympathizing crowd, and was conducted back to prison.

Providence had interposed in a most signal manner on behalf of the innocent.



XIX.

UNDER THE FAMILY ROOF.

GEORGE HERIELLE, whose arrival saved the life of Daniel Eschol, had reached the king sooner than he expected. Having had audience immediately, he easily obtained the reprieve, which he hastened to bring to Paris.

Father Grambert and the goldsmith, after some moments' rest, repaired to the prison of the Châtelet. Admitted to Daniel's cell, they made him repeat what he had told the friar the evening before, questioned him long and minutely, and left convinced that Master Etienne Belval was soon to behold his daughter again.

From the Châtelet they hastened to the Rue St. Denis, to the dwelling of Jenny and Méryem. They found them with Marah, and told them of the reprieve that had been granted to their adoptive brother, and the probability of a speedy deliverance.

These tidings called a ray of joy to the faces so long obscured with grief. The grandmother and the two sisters warmly testified their gratitude to their generous friends.

The monk and his companion examined at their leisure Jenny and Méryem, and recognized in them a great resemblance to Jenny as a child. When they left them they had no longer any doubt; they were

fully convinced that they had seen the daughter of Etienne Belval. But there the difficulty began. Which of the two adoptive sisters was the stolen child? How was she to be distinguished from the daughter of the Bohemians? So many questions impossible to solve.

Father Grambert inclined to believe that Jenny was his friend's offspring; Hérielle, on the contrary, pronounced for Méryem.

"What reason have you for thinking so?" asked the friar.

"Her name."

"The name of Jenny would rather speak in favor of the other."

"I do not think so."

"Yet *Jenny* is nothing more than the translation of Jeanne into another language."

"That is precisely what inclines me towards Méryem. The Bohemians would not have been so imprudent as to leave their victim her name with a slight change."

This argument impressed Father Grambert as very reasonable, and he adopted his friend's opinion. These two friends, so good and so devoted, went again to see Daniel; then, having long deliberated, they concluded that the girls should be told at once of things which so much concerned them. They also resolved to inform Master Belval and his wife that their long-lost child was in Paris.

We will leave it to maternal instinct, to Provi-

dence, said they, to decide whether Jenny or Méryem is the child of these so-long bereaved parents. They divided between them this gracious errand.

Whilst George Hérielle went to the Rue St. Denis, Father Grambert repaired to the village of La Chapelle, to the house of Master Belval. The interior of that desolate dwelling had not changed since Jeanne's disappearance: time had not softened the grief of the child's parents, and they every day bewailed their misfortune.

The friar entered with a joyful countenance, hardly able to conceal his emotion. At sight of him the old decrepid dog scarcely wagged his tail to welcome the arrival of the family's old friend. Etienne Belval, surprised at the unwonted joy that shone in the monk's face, said to him:

"Father, you have, doubtless, received from God some unlooked-for favor. I give you joy."

"It does not concern myself," answered the friar.

"What have you, then, to announce to us?"

"The confirmation of what I often promised you in Heaven's name."

"Speak, I remember nothing of it."

"Have I not many times expressed before you the hope that you should find Jeanne again, and that the Lord himself would dry your tears?"

"It is true; but alas! what can the most ardent wishes, the kindest encouragement, do against stern reality?"

"Yet my trust in God is even now justified."

"What do you mean by that?" cried husband and wife together. "Can you have any news of our child?"

"Better than that," said the Father, smiling.

"Oh! for pity," cried Belval and his wife, "do not buoy us up with false hopes! Have you learned how Jeanne was taken away?"

"Better still than that."

"What! is it possible? have you seen her?"

"Even so; and it will not be long till you see her yourselves."

"Heavens! what do we hear?"

"Nothing but the truth."

"Where is our child? conduct us to her, that we may clasp her in our arms."

"Take patience, and compose yourselves, Jeanne will soon be here."

Master Belval and his wife with difficulty acceded to the request of Father Grambert, who related to them in as few words as possible the events recorded in this history.

He had just finished when the sound of steps in the courtyard reached the ears of the anxious listeners.

"It is they," cried Madam Belval; "they are coming with George Hérielle, whose voice I hear."

And she darted out of the apartment, followed by her husband. Father Grambert went, too, and Thoumy, the faithful dog, dragged himself after his master and mistress.

On reaching the portico, Madam Belval uttered a cry of joy on seeing the two adoptive sisters.

"My daughter! where is my daughter?" she asked, and she stopped suddenly, full of uncertainty, seeing the perfect resemblance between Jenny and Méryem. At last, unable longer to contain herself, she added:

"What matters the origin? children, you are both worthy of my maternal affection. Come, then, to my arms; instead of one daughter I shall have two, and I thank the Lord who thus makes me twofold richer."

Then, suiting the action to the word, the poor mother pressed to her heart in a long embrace the two adoptive sisters.

Meanwhile Father Grambert and Master Belval had rejoined this happy group. Thoumy followed them, smelling the air, and wagging his tail. At sight of the girls the old dog recovered something of his youthful agility; he bounded forward, brushing past Méryem, and went skipping around Jenny. Strangely excited, he jumped upon the maiden, licked her hands, crouched at her feet, fixed his intelligent eyes upon her, and uttered a low whining cry, the only language whereby he could express his happiness.

George Hérielle, the friar, Belval and his wife, all remarked the singular demonstrations of the faithful animal.

"Thoumy," said the goldsmith, "although but a dog, has a keener perception than we have; he has recognized Jenny."

The good monk, the happy father and mother, understood the force of this observation. Still they attached to it but a secondary importance, and it did not appear to them sufficient to constitute an incontestable proof. They agreed that the two young girls, united by a close friendship, should not be separated in the welcome they received.

We shall not attempt to describe the delirious joy that reigned all that day in the house of Etienne Belval ; such gladness is easier imagined than described. The fond mother, who had wept for twelve long years the loss of her child, went from Jenny to Méryem, and could never tire embracing them, admiring them, and blessing the Lord. The smile had reappeared on Etienne's lips, and he regarded the two adoptive sisters with a look of paternal pride and of ineffable tenderness. George Hérielle cordially accepted the second goddaughter whom Heaven had sent him.

Jenny and Méryem were installed with old Marah in the Belval mansion, and were told to consider themselves equally at home.

On the following day, the hearts of both girls were filled with the sweetest emotion, when Father Grambert brought them back Daniel, their adoptive brother, their devoted friend, whom they had thought never to see again. Master Belval welcomed the young man with extreme kindness, and invited him to make his house his home.

Daniel had speedily obtained his liberty. His trial,

submitted to a new examination, had demonstrated his innocence. Father Hermanfred, sent for to Paris by Father Grambert, having made his deposition before the new judges, the prisoner was acquitted on every charge, and set at liberty by the king's order.

Then George Hérielle denounced the conduct of the former judges; not only did Charles VII. deprive them of their office, but he imposed a fine upon them in punishment of their pride and their bad faith.

Daniel did not accept the offer of Etienne Belval to remain in his house. To the worthy man's earnest entreaties he replied :

"I am entirely grateful to you, but I have a sacred mission to fulfil."

These mysterious words closed Belval's mouth. The young man added :

"Nevertheless, sir, I feel encouraged by your goodness to ask a favor of you."

"I will do anything that is pleasing to you," replied Etienne.

"You will watch over my grandmother; I recommend her old age to your charitable care."

"She shall be treated as a member of our family," said Belval, and his wife made the same promise.

Tranquil as to the fate of those whom he loved best in the world, Daniel took leave, eight days after, of his adoptive sisters, Father Grambert, George Hérielle, and the Belval family, and departed without letting any one know the object of the journey he was about to undertake.

XX.

AFTER DARKNESS, LIGHT.

A YEAR and some days had passed away since the Belvals had their daughter restored to them. Etienne, his wife, Jenny, Méryem and old Marah were assembled in the common hall. Every face was gay. The master of the house was sitting opposite to Daniel's grandmother, playing with the faithful dog. The volery was again peopled with harmonious guests, and sweet-scented flowers filled the baskets placed before the high windows.

Yet a shade of sadness still lingered on the face of Madam Belval; she now felt the ardent desire to know which of the two adoptive sisters was her beloved Jenny, and she despaired of ever finding out which was her true daughter.

Whilst all these beings, lately so afflicted, were enjoying their reunion and their mutual affection, a certain tumult was heard in the courtyard; and almost immediately numerous footsteps were heard on the stairs. At the same time Annette ran in quite flurried.

"What is the matter?" demanded Etienne Belval, astonished.

Before Jeanne's nurse could answer her master's question, a religious in a strange costume appeared in the doorway; he was clothed in a white tunic, with a scapular, and a cape or cloak; on the scapular was

traced in embroidery a shield with the arms of the royal house of Arragon.

"Daniel!" cried the girls starting up.

"Himself," answered the young man with a smile as he gravely advanced to the centre of the hall.

After him came half a score or so of men poorly clad, with sandals on their feet, and staves in their hands. Long hair, a thick and bushy beard, gave them a strange, wild aspect.

At sight of these visitors, and especially the first, Jenny and Méryem turned pale and started back in terror; they had recognized Léonor Eschol, Toby Spiller, and several other Bohemians.

"You are afraid of me, virtuous children," murmured the former chief of the Bohemians in a melancholy tone. And as no one answered, he added in a voice of supplication :

"Do not reject me, I beseech you. I should never have appeared in your presence were it not that I had an act of reparation to perform. The impious brigand whom you knew of old assuredly deserves no indulgence at your hands; but he is become a Christian, and repents of his crimes. My companions and I implore your pardon."

Jenny and Méryem raised their eyes to the suppliant, in order to ascertain whether he was sincere or not. Léonor pursued :

"These men and I fell into the power of the Barbary pirates, and underwent a hard captivity. Daniel, always generous, succeeded in delivering us."

The young man then took up the narrative where his father left off. After relating the negotiations between Lénor and the Moorish captain, he continued :

"Hearing nothing more of the chief or his band, I suspected that the pirate in whom he had trusted, breaking his word, had perfidiously carried him to Africa. I resolved, then, on leaving prison, to go in search of him, and it was for that purpose I quitted you last year.

"In order to accomplish my design more surely, I entered the religious order of Our Lady of Mercy, which is devoted to the redemption of captives. I soon after set out for the African shore. After a patient and persevering search I found my father and three of his companions in the galleys of Tunis. I redeemed them all ; then I went to work to break the chains of all the other members of our tribe. Nearly all of them had already sunk beneath disease, fatigue, and bad treatment ; there remained but those whom you see here. Changed by misfortune, they were all converted on their return to Europe.

"Resolved to consecrate their life to the expiation of the past, they wished to accompany my father hither, where he wished to obtain the pardon of his innocent victims, and also that of the unhappy parents whose only child he had carried off."

"You see before you a great criminal," said Lénor Eschol, his rough face expressing the most profound sorrow.

"The happiness which Heaven gives us now," said

Etienne Belval, "amply compensates for the cruel grief we have felt for years long. So we forgive you."

"Be you blessed for such mercy," exclaimed the Bohemians.

"I make one condition," said Belval.

"What is it?"

"That you tell us truly all about the stealing of Jeanne."

Lénor willingly complied.

"What was your object in causing us such cruel grief?" inquired Belval again.

"We had lost our king and queen when we came to La Chapelle; my wife and I had inherited their power, and they had left us two daughters, Jenny and Méryem. Jenny fell ill, and died some days after our arrival in this village. This loss was a serious one to us, for we only governed the tribe in the name of these two children: our authority was insecure, and we feared lest they might accuse us of making away with the child. I resolved to replace her. I saw Jeanne; her resemblance to Jenny struck me, and I took her away. In the course of time my power was secured, and I only thought of turning to account the two young girls, who were wont to consider themselves as my offspring."

"In that case," interrupted Madam Belval, "it is Jenny who is my daughter?"

"Without any doubt. Besides, I can give you another proof: the daughter of our king bears on her

forearm a slight purple mark, peculiar to the members of the tribe ; Jenny has it not."

The fact was immediately verified, and it remained certain that Jenny was, indeed, the child stolen from the *landit* fair.

By this time Father Grambert and George Hérielle had arrived, and great was their joy on learning what had happened.

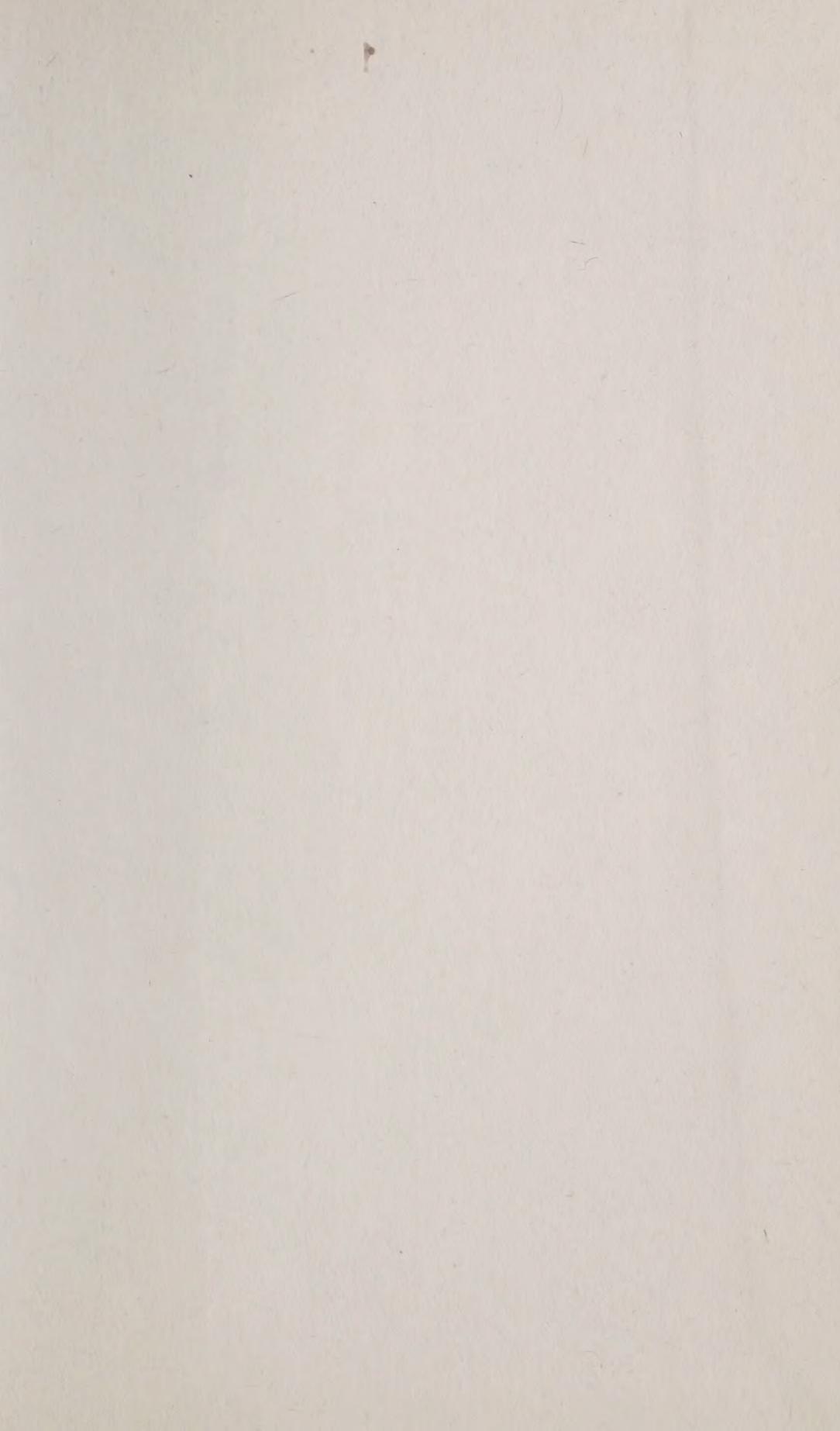
Daniel had not yet taken the solemn vows of the Order of Mercy, and the Belval family insisted on keeping him with his father, but they refused. The young man, Lénor Eschol, and three of their companions, finally entered the Order of Mercy, in which they took the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, to which they joined that of devoting their own persons, and if necessary remaining in chains, for the redemption of captives.

Marah lived some years yet in the hospitable house wherein she had found an asylum. Mériyem, adopted by Master Etienne Belval, remained the sister and companion of Jeanne, who never ceased to love and cherish her with the tenderest affection.

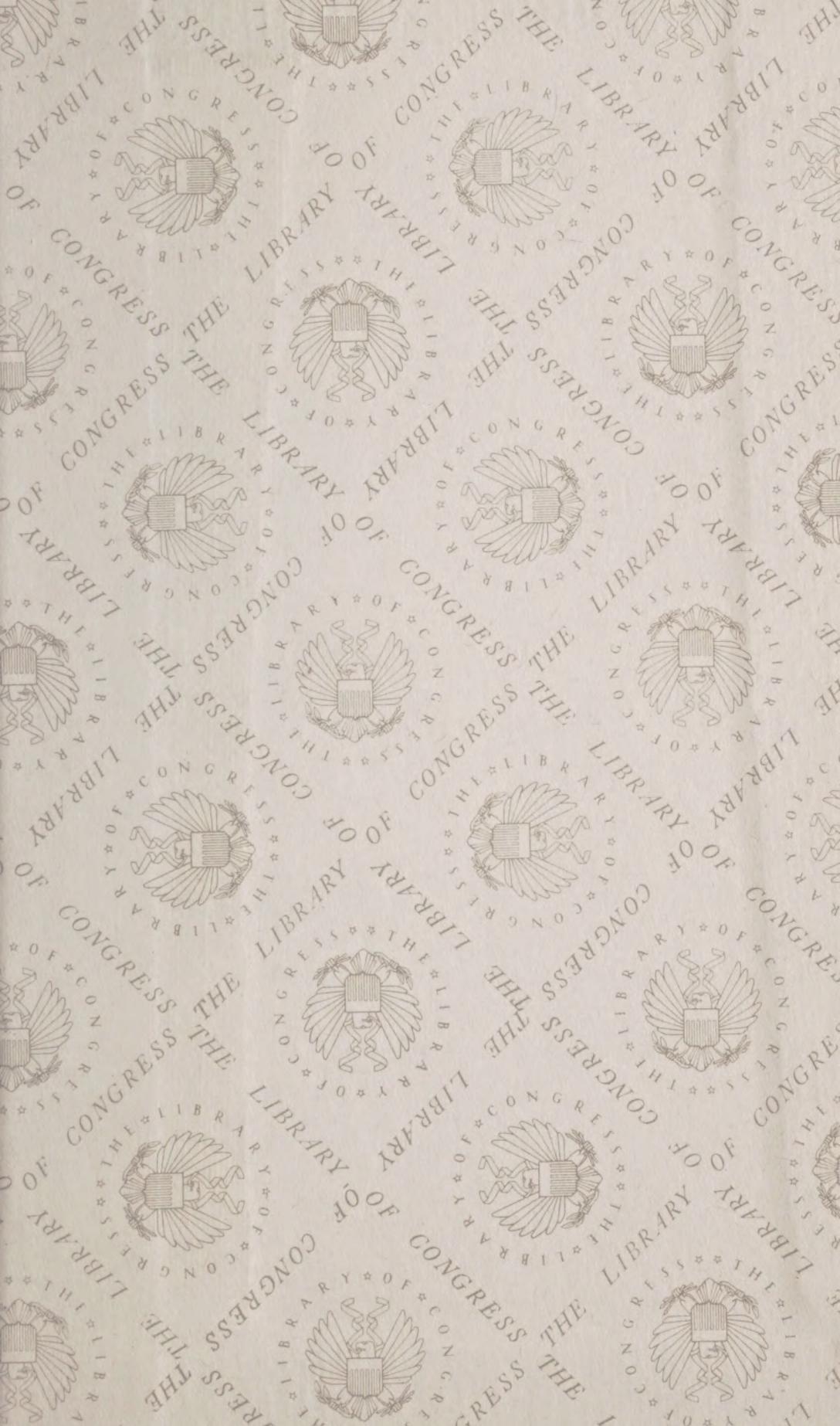
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